Short Stories.

No. 725. Week ending November 22nd, 1902. Price One Penny.

"I MARRY THE MAN TO WHOM I DEAL THE QUEEN OF HEARTS!"

Worth a Guinea a Box.

BEECHAM'S PILLS.

No other medicine in the world can claim so many regular users. Thousands of families always keep a box of BEECHAM'S PILLS in the house, so that, on the first sign of any irregularity of the system, a timely dose may be administered, and further trouble and suffering averted. Nine-tenths of the BEECHAM'S PILLS sold are purchased by those who HAVE USED THEM BEFORE and have found them indispensable as

A FAMILY MEDICINE.

Sold everywhere in Boxes price 1s. 1½d. (56 pills) and 2s. 9d. (168 pills).

"LET'S TALK OF GRAVES' Cutlery"

THE "ENTERPRISE" . PARCEL . 25/-

Household Cutlery & Plate.

Containing: 6 Table Knives and 6 Dessert Knives, made of reliable Sheffield Steel and fitted with polished white "Ivorette" Handles. "Ivorette" is the best substitute for genuine African Ivory. The Plate consists of 6 Table Forks, 6 Dessert Forks, 2 Table Spoons, 6 Dessert Spoons, 6 Tea Spoons, 6 Egg Spoons, 1 Mustard Spoons, 2 Salt Spoons, 1 Pair of Sugar Tongs, 1 Moist Sugar Spoon and 1 Pickle Fork.

The Spoons and Forks are made of 'Columbian' Silver, a hard white metal. It is the finest substitute for Sterling Silver known, will wear white throughout, and is unaffected by acids or exposure.

J. G. Graves is the only Manufacturer who supplies the Public direct, and the whole of the above Goods are made in the Firm's own factory in Sheffield.

HOW TO PAY.

Send 5s. with order and complete purchase in five more monthly payments of 4s.; or HANDSOME BONUS PRESENT for full cash payment.

All orders are executed under Positive Agreement to refund the full amount of the deposit if the Goods are not perfectly satisfactory in every respect.

Send for No. 1 Catalogue of Watches, Clocks, Jewellery Cutlery and Plate, Fancy Goods, etc., Post free.

GOOD AGENTS WANTED in spare time. Persons in regular employment should write for terms and particulars. No. Risk. Good Pay.

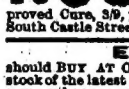
J. G. GRAVES, 69 Division St., SHEFFIELD.

NOSE RAY'S NOSE MACHINES Cure Pug, Snub, Flat, Dumpy, Bottled, Crooked, or Prominent Noses. By H.M. Royal Letters Patent. Particulars for stamp. Pamphlet, "Red Nose, Cause and Cure," 1/-, or medically approved Cure, 3/9, privately. LEES RAY (BT), Specialist South Castle Street, Liverpool. Ear Machines, &c.

EVERY LADY

should BUY AT ONCE for NEXT TO NOTHING from the stock of the latest fashionable COSTUMES and MILLINERY, worn only once or twice, placed for disposal by ladies in the HIGHEST LONDON SOCIETY with Miss Selwyn, The Ladies' Mart, 99 Regent Street, London, W. *Or send 2d. in stamps for details.*

JUST READ IT.

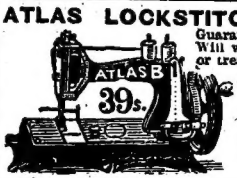


FREE.

You can earn a 3 years warranted Watch, Life-sized Doll, Powerful Air Rifle, Beautiful Solid Gold filled Dress Rings, Long Guard, Bracelet, and Jewellery of all kinds from our list of presents. You can have any of these FREE after selling Nine Articles of Exquisite Jewellery, at 9d. each (sold by shops at 1/6.) We send the goods on approval on receipt of your post-card. When sold you remit us the 6/9, and you get a Beautiful Present, absolutely free. Send no money, we trust you. You take no risk, as they sell at once, and we receive back unsold goods. Colonials must send 1/- for extra postage.

(Room 50) HYDE PARK WATCH CO., 14 Ranelagh Road, Paddington, London, W.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.



Guaranteed 4 years. Will work by hand or treadle. To ensure satisfaction, machine sent on receipt of 5/-. P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL: or, if desired, can be paid 5/- Monthly. Write for terms, Designs, and Samples of work. 39/-

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 184a High St., Camden Town, London, N.W. 63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn

RUN NO RISK

KEATING'S LOZENGES CURE

THE WORST COUGH

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

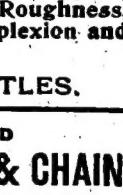
For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

A CELEBRATED

NELSON WATCH & CHAIN

FREE FOR ONE DAY'S WORK.



We send this Genuine 30-Hour Nickel-Plated WATCH, Warranted an ACCURATE TIME-KEEPER, with Chain and Pendant, for Selling Seven Beautiful Articles at 1/- each. Sterling Value. Send your full Name and Address (Post-card will do) by Return of Post, and we will at once forward the box of Handsome Goods, Post Paid, and a large Premium List. No Money Required. WE TRUST YOU. We send the Goods at our own risk. Send us the money that you get for them, and we send you the Watch, Chain and Pendant by Registered Post.

THE NELSON MANUFACTURING CO., 72, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK,

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

2½% DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS 2½% repayable on demand.

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

MACKINTOSH'S

IS DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS!

PUREST OF THE PURE. Sold Everywhere.

A very large Sample Packet sent post free for eight penny stamps. J. MACKINTOSH Ltd., The Toffee Mills, HALIFAX. *Wholesale dealers should stock this Toffee as it sells at sight.*

EXTRA CREAM TOFFEE

Short Stories.

No. 725. For the Week Ending November 22nd, 1902. One Penny.

FASCINATING NEW SERIES. BEGIN TO-DAY.

HOW I CHAPERONED BELINDA

By Lady Peggy Carstairs.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

LADY PEGGY CARSTAIRS. A widow, who, having lost all her money in a bank failure, undertakes to chaperon Belinda.

BELINDA NORTH. A beautiful daughter of Hardy North, an Australian millionaire.

CRAWLEY DRUMMOND. Lady Peggy's old friend and adviser.

DUKE OF EASTACRES. A comparatively penniless suitor for Belinda's hand.

DUCHESS OF EASTACRES. His mother.

LORD REGINALD DAVENANT. Another of Belinda's suitors.

LADY HONORIA. The Duke's sister.

DAVID CARR. A young engineer, with whom Belinda is in love.

HOW LADY PEGGY FINDS BELINDA.

Lady Peggy undertakes, for the sum of twenty thousand pounds, to chaperon Belinda, and to marry her to a son of some old and titled family. Staying at the same hotel in Cairo are the Duke of Eastacres and his mother, the Duchess. Lady Peggy and the Duchess agree that nothing could be better than a union of the Duke's title and Belinda's millions; everything is therefore done to bring this about. One evening, under the guidance of a fine looking Bedouin, they all go to witness a religious festival. Some dervishes are dancing when suddenly Belinda, excited beyond all self-restraint, throws herself into the midst of the fanatics and tries to imitate their weird dance. Her enthusiasm is misinterpreted. Instantly all is confusion. The guide, however, snatches Belinda from danger, and hurries them away. Belinda is profuse in her thanks, then suddenly with a cry of: "It is you, you! Lady Peggy, he's not a dragoman at all. He's David Carr," throws herself into his arms.

The dragoman is dismissed, and back at the hotel the Duchess of Eastacres takes Lady Peggy to task for the occurrence. Lady Peggy retorts that not long ago she saw the Duchess' own daughter Honoria in the arms of a real Egyptian. The Duchess is furious, calls Honoria, and after storming at her, is slapping her face when Belinda rushes in, rescues Honoria and takes her to her room. Shortly afterwards a fearful shriek is heard, followed by an impassioned appeal for "Help!" The voice is Belinda's!

We Visit the Pyramids.

I wasted neither time nor thought in wondering what had happened; but went swiftly up the stairs and across the corridor towards Belinda's room, Crawley and Lord Davenant following close behind. Doors flew open, anxious faces watched, eager voices questioned as I passed. "What did it mean, what could it be?"

Once more the cry of "Help!" rang out, but by that time I had reached Belinda's door, had turned the handle, crossed the threshold.

And then!

In the middle of the room I beheld Belinda, with terror-stricken eyes and white, blanched face, struggling with Honoria, struggling to gain possession of something that the distracted girl clasped tightly in her clenched hand, clenched with a strength and tenacity I had not thought her capable of showing.

In a flash I grasped the situation, and promptly took the initiative. I smartly shut the door and turned the key. Then, falling upon Honoria, with Belinda's help, forced her to unclose her fingers, which were convulsively gripping a small phial.

I uncorked the bottle, smelt the contents, and put it down with a queer, sickening feeling. A terrible tragedy had only just been averted. The bottle contained laudanum of sufficient quantity and strength to kill a far stronger woman than Honoria.

She, poor wretched girl, lay in a heap upon the floor, giving utterance to low, broken cries that brought tears to Belinda's beautiful eyes, and made me for a moment weaken. The next, I had pulled myself together.

"What does this mean?" I asked sharply. "Belinda, stop crying at once, and help Honoria on to the bed. Now," I demanded when my directions had been carried out, "will you please explain yourself?"

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

Honoria sat upright and gazed at me in an excited sort of way.

"I meant to take poison," she said slowly. "I came here, to Belinda's room, because I have no peace, no quiet in my own."

"What could have put such a wicked, such an awful idea into your mind?" I asked.

Honoria's thin lips twitched.

"*You* know," she said sullenly. "You know quite well my brother says I am to marry Mark Striven. Oh!" She shivered and her lips grew white. "I am frightened, *frightened!* Don't let him hurt me. Keep him away, Belinda"—she threw out her hands and clung piteously to the young girl.

"Surely, Honor, you are not so silly as to think of killing yourself because your brother says you are to marry a man you don't like?" said Belinda indignantly. "Don't marry him; refuse point blank, that's all you have to do."

"You don't understand," whispered Honoria. "How should you? Girls like you know nothing of the lives women like me have to lead. Listen," she grasped Belinda's wrist, bringing the fresh young face close to her own, "if I don't marry this man, my brother will have me sent away, shut up in a strange, terrible place, where I shall see no one but strange, terrible people. He has said so, and he meant it. And I am powerless to go against him. What can I do? There is nobody to help me—to care for me. Nobody but Hamed, and I dare not send to him. Look at me," she turned her head, and the light fell on her face, with its weak blue eyes, tremulous mouth, and indeterminate features. "No one wants me, or cares for me," she went on bitterly. "I'm neither pretty, nor clever, nor rich. My mother has always been ashamed of me, and my brother dislikes and despises me. They want to be rid of me, but there's only one way of doing that—marriage, and," she paused, "no one will marry me," she said, a flush in her cheeks. "No one but Mark Striven. I can't work," she put out her white, helpless-looking hands. "I should have to starve if I depended upon myself for bread. And I don't want to starve; *that*," she glanced towards the bottle that I still firmly held, "that is the easier way!"

"Honor, don't talk like that," beseeched Belinda. "I'll help you, dear. I'll be your friend. I'll lend you all the money you want, so that you can go away by yourself to some place where no one can find you except me and Hamed. I'll write to Hamed for you if you wish. I'll——"

All further undertakings on Belinda's part were nipped in the bud.

"You will please understand, my dear," I said calmly but firmly, "that I cannot countenance you in assisting Honoria to disobey her people. Her mother and brother are the best judges of what is for her good. How can a young and inexperienced girl like you understand what is fitting?"

"Honor doesn't wish to marry this person." retorted Belinda. "I can understand *that*, at any rate. If I can help it, she shan't marry him. Lady Peggy," she turned towards me swiftly, "perhaps the Duke doesn't understand how much Honor dislikes the idea. She finds it difficult to express herself at times, poor dear. Let me talk to the Duke? He was very nice to me this morning. Perhaps I may be able to persuade him. May I go, Lady Peggy?"

I smiled discreetly. Nothing could have pleased me better. Belinda's errand would give Eastacres a splendid opportunity for ingratiating himself with her. He would yield to her persuasions, and by doing so, imply the extent of his regard. My pretty, blue-eyed charge was knotting the end of the noose round her own neck.

I did not show my satisfaction at the proposition, however, but shook my head.

"The Duke would resent your interference, Belinda. Besides, it would be in vain. He is a very determined man, and most difficult to move!"

"I'll try, at any rate," and without waiting for permission, Belinda hurried off.

Awaiting the result of her mission I sat by Honoria's side and gave her good advice.

"You're fond of Belinda?" I observed.

A dispirited "Yes," came from the pillow.

"You wish to retain her friendship and companionship?"

Honoria turned an agonised glance upon me.

"You're not going to say she mustn't speak to me?" she gasped.

"Certainly not—unless you persist in being foolish. Belinda may remain your friend on one condition, that you don't tell her ridiculous stories about your brother—stories that are likely to influence her against him. Eastacres will probably marry Belinda. You understand?"

"You don't really mean to let her marry him?" she asked. "He said something about it this morning, but I didn't believe it. Lady Peggy, it's too dreadful to think of! He is a bad, cruel man; you don't know how cruel. He'll break Belinda's heart before she's been his wife a year!"

"Nonsense!" I returned sharply. I knew Eastacres hadn't an amiable disposition, but I didn't want to be reminded of it. "They'll be a most devoted couple if you don't prejudice Belinda against him. Anyway, understand this, Honoria, if you say a word against your brother I shall forbid Belinda to speak to you. If necessary I shall leave Cairo to avoid you. If, however, you behave properly, I've no objection to her seeing you occasionally."

Honoria sighed.

"I ought not to consent," she said. "Belinda's been very good to me, but I suppose I must. I'll say no more to her about Lawson, Lady Peggy."

"I'm glad to hear it, Honoria. If you would be as sensible in other matters you'd get on much better with everybody, Eastacres included. Take my advice now, and be nice to Mark Striven when he comes to-night."

"I can't," she moaned. "*I can't!*"

I had no energy to waste upon the foolish girl, so I did not further combat her obstinacy, but waited in silence until Belinda reappeared. She returned in triumph, with a fine colour in her cheeks.

"Your brother's come to see you, Honor," she said. "May he come in? He's been so kind, and he is so sorry that you're ill. Try to be nice to him," she added, as the girl showed signs of aversion at the mention of his presence.

"Come in, Duke," called Belinda. "Honor's better now."

In the short scene that followed, I must confess the Duke enacted his part to perfection. He assumed the affectionate yet grieved brother, and gently yet earnestly rebuked Honoria, till the silly thing was genuinely moved.

"You had better rest this afternoon," he said kindly. "I'll send some books up to your room. I shouldn't come down to *table d'hote*; you can have your food upstairs. Don't worry about Mark. Mother will look after him till I come back. Good-bye, Honoria, and don't worry." He stooped and kissed, yes, actually kissed his sister's forehead. Honoria sighed as he left the room, and Belinda, flushed with delight at her successful impersonation of a peace-maker, showed every sympathy.

The Duke and I held a short conclave in the corridor.

"Honoria won't say anything indiscreet to Belinda now," I whispered. "I've seen to that."

"A thousand thanks," said the Duke, smiling.

"And"—I laid my hand upon his arm—"try to be patient with your sister. Belinda——"

"I will be the most loving and considerate of brothers," he said, with a little sneer, "for the present. And now about the Pyramids, Lady Peggy. When are we going to start?"

"It's a little late to-day," I said dubiously, "it's just on five."

Digitized by Google

"We shall be at the Mena about eight," he answered anxiously. "I don't want to put it off. People will talk enough as it is," and he glanced angrily towards the room which, for the moment, sheltered Honoria from his wrath.

"Very well, Duke, it shall be as you wish, as you say our going will help to stop the gossip."

A quarter of an hour after our cavalcade set forth, thereby escaping something of the shower of questions and surmises that Honoria's escapade called forth.

"Matter, my dear?" said I to Midge, who was gasping with fright or annoyance, I can't say which. "Nothing at all. Honoria had a bad fit of hysterics and Belinda took fright, that's all."

My explanation or the reappearance of Reggie calmed her. She mounted her camel and ambled after Belinda and the Duke, already disappearing in the distance, while Crawley and I took our places in a carriage as more befitting our age and ideas as to comfort.

I leant back in my seat with a sigh of content. Life was going smoothly with me for the present, and in the future—the near future, I was certain of £20,000!

I quite blessed Honoria for her attempt at suicide. She had been the means of bringing Eastacres into close touch with Belinda. The Duke's ready acquiescence to her wishes had undoubtedly gratified the girl's vanity, and as a wise man remarked, "look after a woman's vanity, and her love will take care of itself."

We drove swiftly through the desert, fanned by a breezy wind that tossed the sand into tiny billows, and bent the tall heads of the distant palms. It had been a terribly hot day, and the cool of the approaching evening was very pleasant. The sun crept lower and lower towards the horizon. In its slanting rays the Nile gleamed a blood red, fading suddenly into a dusky grey. The sun had set. The grey crept from the river to the desert, deepening swiftly into night.

We found the rest of our party comfortably established on the verandah of the hotel, enjoying the view; Belinda and the Duke, with Reggie on the other side; Midge, a short distance away, was talking volubly to a good-looking boy in glasses.

"It's quite absurd, the way one meets people in Egypt," said Midge, pointing airily to her companion. "Long lost relations claim you as kith and kin, missing parents are unearthed by their sorrowing offspring, and prodigal sons are discovered playing with the fatted calf. Whoever could have dreamt of finding cousin Randolph right here at the Pyramids?"

She smiled in dazzling fashion at the hapless Randolph, who surrendered then and there to the little lady's charm. If Midge hoped to rouse the fire of jealousy slumbering in Davenant's heart by this manœuvre, she was grievously disappointed. Reggie appeared resigned, if not delighted, at the finding of the cousin; Randolph would free him from attendance upon Midge and give him time for attentions to Belinda.

There were a good many people at the Mena, Americans and English mostly, with a sprinkling of Egyptian officials. As usual, everybody stared at Belinda when we entered the dining-room, one man going so far as to pause in the discussion of an excellent omelette to study the lines of her profile.

She accepted the homage with her usual calm indifference, and exchanged remarks with the Duke in her clear voice with the greatest *sang froid*.

"Not go up the Pyramids to-night?" she cried, "Oh, Duke, this is unkind of you. It won't be any fun at all if we have to wait till the morning. I want to walk up like a human being, not wait to be hauled to the top like a bale of goods by a crowd of chattering, grinning Arabs."

"My dear girl," said Eastacres, "It is hardly safe to venture without guides after nightfall. You might stumble, catch your foot in a stone, or something equally dreadful."

"I'm not likely to fall," laughed the girl. "I can climb like a goat and jump, well, almost as high as a kangaroo. I shall be all right; besides, you'll be there to look after me?" She gazed at him with a directness that robbed the speech of all suggestion of coquetry.

"Of course I shall, if you're bent on going."

"I must see the Great Pyramid to-night, at any rate," she said decisively. "Will you come, Lady Peggy?"

I smiled and shook my head. The Duke, I thought, would make a very efficient substitute. I had need of rest. I was compelled to change my views, however, when I heard that Reggie had determined to accompany the pair, with the unkind intention, I am sure, of spoiling the Duke's opportunity for private conversation. I appealed to Crawley to save the situation and pair with Davenant, but he refused to stir, and Midge haughtily declined even to consider the suggestion.

For a moment I was in despair. I hated the idea of a ridiculous and undignified scramble up an absurd heap of stones, but it seemed I should be forced to the sacrifice. Crawley, however, doubtless to appease his conscience, told me that a party had started for Cheops, generally called the Great Pyramid, just before we arrived.

"You'll meet them coming down, Peggy. You can insist on questioning them. That will insure you and Davenant a rest, and the Duke——" Crawley grinned and nodded his foolish head.

Reggie seemed hardly pleased when I appeared on the verandah.

"I'm coming too," I said, "it's such a lovely night," and with a gentle smile I slipped my arm through the young man's and held it lightly but firmly.

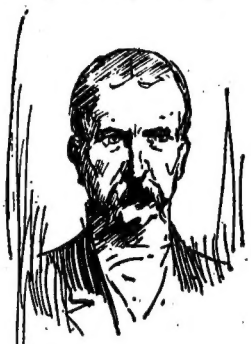
I suppose had I been as young as Belinda I should have felt as deeply stirred as she by the wonder and beauty of the scene. The desert, the wild free sea of sand that surrounded the hotel—an oasis of civilisation—was steeped in the wonderful white light of the African moon. Before us darkly frowning up against the sky rose the Pyramids, tombs of the great, immutable as death itself, changeless as eternity. Here and there grew clumps of spiky mimosa bushes, and in the moonshine a few stunted palms flourished their branches. And surveying it all with mystic and unfathomable smile, the face of the Sphinx looked over the desert, the People, and the Pyramids—the new world and the old.

In the distance the smoke of an Arab fire curled up to Heaven, tall, shrouded figures gathered round the blaze, while from the Mena came the click of the billiard balls, the sound of the mandoline, the ripple of a woman's laugh.

Belinda's enthusiasm grew as we approached the Pyramid. She hurried the Duke at such a pace that I had difficulty to keep up with them. Reggie, however, insisted I should make an effort, and, much against my will, assisted me with such earnestness that we did not once lose sight of them.

It is not a very difficult matter to climb the Great Pyramid, with plenty of time and breath. It is for all the world like going up a steep flight of stairs, only the resting-places are very far apart.

At the end of the first stage I sat down exhausted. Belinda, to my annoyance, followed suit, and gazed rapturously at the prospect. The Duke gazed rapturously too—though not at the prospect. Truly the scene before us was a marvellous one. We looked down at the Delta of the Nile interspersed with countless canals and rivulets winding about like silver threads, and glistening like jewels in the moonshine. In the distance gleamed the domes and palaces of Cairo, a diamond stud set in a silver fan.



I found some difficulty in recommencing my ascent, and by the time Reggie and I had joined the second stage Belinda and the Duke were half way up the third. At this point we encountered the

Digitized by Google

party of tourists of which Crawley had spoken. One of them recognised Reggie, hailed him with glee, and, to my great satisfaction, button-holed him on the spot.

I left him to the tender mercies of his new companion, and scrambled up the last stage by myself. I was anxious to see how matters were progressing with Belinda and the Duke. I did not find them as I expected waiting my arrival, and I concluded they had gone to explore the tomb of Rameses. As a girl, I had been a frequent visitor to Cairo. My father was an ancient Egyptologist, and would spend hours in speechless admiration at the remnants of a temple or a portion of a tomb.

I had often and painfully climbed the Pyramids and explored them through and through. I had small difficulty, therefore, in finding the passage that leads to the Great Gallery and the King's Tomb.

Some members of the party we had met had left their candles stuck in the walls. I took one in my hand and by its dim light I could find my way in safety if not comfort. As I neared the end of the passage a whistle rang out clear and sweet as the trill of a bird.

"Listen to the echoes," cried Belinda, as the whistle returned again and yet again. And the terrible girl whistled once more.

The Duke did not attempt to end this unladylike performance, but clapped his hands in applause. In his enthusiasm he dropped the candle he was carrying; for the moment they were plunged in darkness, and just at that part of the passage, as I remembered with a horrible distinctness, there was a break in the masonry, a sort of pit into which it would be dangerous to fall.

Quick on my thought came a stumble, a cry. I rushed forward, light in hand. Belinda was standing safe, but rather white, on the farther side of the danger trap, leaning against the Duke. He was supporting her with tender yet eager solicitude.

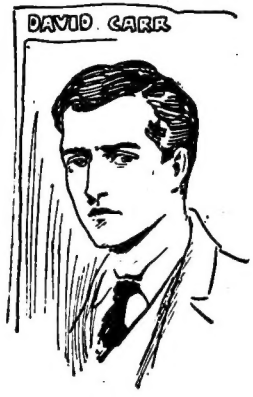
"A narrow escape, Lady Peggy," he said, as I came up. "Another moment and Miss North would have had a nasty fall."

"You were very quick and very clever," said Belinda gratefully, "and most brave."

The Duke smiled and disclaimed any special courage. Personally, I don't think he had displayed any. On close inspection the pit proved to be little more than a foot deep, being nearly filled up with rubbish. But Eastacres took all possible credit for his performance, however, and fell in with the suggestion that Belinda should rest awhile in the great King's Tomb.

The tomb is a small room built of stone, and once upon a time contained the mummies of several Rameses. The burying-place of kings now served to give rest to Belinda. How those ancient persons would have opened their eyes could they have seen her, a fair-haired divinity in blue serge!

She was still a little frightened, and clung appealingly to Eastacres, as she would have clung to anybody at that moment. The pale face of the Duke flushed as he felt the pressure of her warm, bare hand. His breath came quickly, and his eyes narrowed as they wandered from point to point of her beauty. Her head thrown back, showed the curve of her round, white throat, with a glimpse of a small, pink ear. He tightened his clasp about the lissom figure and drew her closer to him.



Something of cruelty and exultance came into his face. He watched her as a boy watches the exquisite motions of a moth, desirous to catch the creature only that he may crush it.

For a moment I wished that Davenant and not the Duke was going to marry Belinda, but only for a moment; the next I remembered that Davenant's was only a courtesy title, he being the younger son of the Duke of St. Ormont, and, therefore, of no use to me or Belinda. It wasn't likely Hardy North would think a younger son worth £20,000.

"Are you better?" Eastacres asked slowly.

"Yes, thank you," said Belinda with a sigh. "It's awfully silly of me to be so foolish and turn faint when nothing's happened, but it's awful to feel the ground slipping from under one's feet."

"Terrible!" said Eastacres sympathetically. As he spoke he led her from the room, skilfully engineered her past the hole, and so into the fresh air once more.

Not more than fifteen minutes had elapsed since they had first entered the great passage. But in that fifteen minutes much had happened. Belinda looked upon the Duke as one who had saved her from a dreadful accident; her feeling towards him was softened. The noose already had begun to tighten.

The next day we went for an expedition in the desert. That is to say, Belinda and the Duke, Crawley and Davenant. Midge and I stayed at home. Randolph, the newly discovered cousin, hung about in disconsolate fashion. He was only petted when Reggie was there. During that individual's absence he was ignored, not to say snubbed.

Midge unburdened herself to me at great length in the privacy of her room.

"Reggie's behaving shamefully, Peggy," she cried with heightened colour. "It's scandalous the way he neglects me to go after this girl. I sent him a message last night to say that I must speak to him. He sent word back he was so awfully tired, would I excuse him? *Tired!* When I was waiting for him. A one time he thought nothing of fatigue or trouble when I was concerned. I can't stand it, Peggy. I shall do something desperate if it goes on. The girl doesn't want him, she doesn't mind if he's with her or not. You must tell her to snub him, Peggy. I mean it, you must give Belinda her orders in respect to Reggie!"

"My dear Midge, you are excited, and——" I glanced at the flushed, eager face, and thence to her open dressing-case. Rumour had it that Mrs. Murchison-Lee's vivacity and wonderful flow of spirits had their root in hypodermic injections of morphia. I thought an injection might be helpful at that moment. She seemed to read my thoughts, and coloured from brow to chin.

"I'm not using morphia," she said sullenly. Then, "Peggy, if you don't speak to Belinda I will. I'll tell her all about the Duke, and how badly he treated that pretty little Armstrong girl."

"Don't be absurd, Midge!"

"I mean it!" She grasped me by the arm, her eyes flashing, her face twitching. For the moment I was alarmed. Midge was utterly irresponsible. Her husband, a Chicago manufacturer, never interfered with her. She obeyed each impulse, every whim that seized her, and was quite capable of upsetting all my plans and hopes in regard to Belinda.

There was but one way of subduing the little woman. Deprive her of morphia, keep her without the drug that stimulated nerves and brain to such abnormal quickness, and she would be limp as a rag and as helpless.

"I shall tell Belinda," she repeated, and then, falling from temper to tears, threw herself into a comfortable chair, and rocking herself to and fro, sobbed piteously. Her head was turned away from me, towards the window, her face buried in a pocket handkerchief. Now was my time and opportunity.

"Poor Midge!" I said commiseratingly. "It's too bad that a girl in her first season should cut you out!" As I spoke I deftly lifted the lid from her dressing-case. There, in the lower compartment, nestling in the corner, was the bottle that I sought, together with the hypodermic syringe, a tiny little affair small enough to go into the pocket. I slipped bottle and syringe into mine softly, almost stealthily, and withdrew.

Digitized by Google

Midge was checkmated! She would not come down to dinner that night, I surmised. She would, in fact, be unable to do so. Such slaves are the victims of the morphine habit, that they cannot go without the drug for longer than an hour or two. And their sufferings if kept without are terrible. I meant Midge to suffer. She should only have her morphia back on certain terms, and in the middle of the desert she could not get a fresh supply.

There were two or three fresh arrivals at the Mena in the course of the day. Among them was Stanley Forbes, the famous barrister. A few years previous to the time of which I am writing, Stanley was one of the most prominent and most popular figures in Society. He was the heir to a baronetcy, and had large private means besides his practice, which brought him in some thousands. His prospective title and his personal charm made him a most desirable *parti*. Great, therefore, was the sorrow among ambitious mothers when he suddenly and unexpectedly threw up his work at the Bar and disappeared. Many and wild were the reasons assigned for his conduct. One tale I remember gained credence for a short time, to the effect that he was in love with a charming young cousin—an Irish girl who lived in the wilds of Galway. Rumour had it that one fine morning Sheila Kenwyn left her home, and had not been heard of since.

Stanley, broken-hearted at her loss, had vowed to find her and execute dire vengeance on the man who had taken her from home and from him. That there was a man in the case was a foregone conclusion.

Stanley was a tall, striking-looking man, with keen eyes and clear-cut features, and a particularly charming smile. He was a favourite of mine, and we enjoyed a quiet chat until dinner.

As I expected, Midge did not turn up. Neither did the Duke, or his party. After dinner I received a wild note from Midge, imploring me to come to her room. I put the note in my pocket—it would do her no harm to wait a little longer—and sat down by my window to enjoy the view.

I watched till once more the moon lit up the heavens, watched until I could distinguish the figures of Belinda and the Duke, with Reggie and Crawley close behind. The two first came straight into the hotel, Eastacres and Belinda lingered in the garden.

I leant as far out of my window as was consistent with safety, and resolved to watch them with intense excitement. Given a garden, or a wilderness—either will do—moonlight, a lovely girl, and a man versed in the art of pleasing women, and in most cases the result could be foretold with certainty.

If only the image of that hateful David Carr could be erased from the girl's mind. If only she could forget his tall, strong figure, his dark face and passionate eyes. If only——

The Duke was speaking quickly, eagerly, to Belinda. The girl listened, her face turned towards him. He took her hand and raised it to his lips.

The caress startled the girl, she drew back and glanced apprehensively towards the house. The action irritated Eastacres. I saw him catch his under lip between his teeth. Then, with a sudden, unexpected movement, he bent towards her. Holding her firmly round the waist, he drew her face towards his own. Belinda had found her master early in the game, I thought, and waited for the sequel.

It proved to be an unexpected one.

Suddenly, swiftly, without sign or warning, a figure stepped from the bushes at their back. A strong hand dropped upon Eastacres' shoulder and roughly drew him from Belinda's side.

"I've been looking for you, Duke," remarked the newcomer, "for a long time. Now I've found you I should like a little talk."

He smiled grimly as he spoke, and laid his hand once more upon the other's arm.

Eastacres' face seemed to grow absolutely bloodless. Then, with an effort, he steadied himself.

"I am at your service," he said quietly. "Miss North, you will excuse me?"

Belinda nodded, and hurriedly left them. A sudden foreboding of danger made me fling on a wrap, hurry downstairs, and steal after these two figures walking rapidly, crossing the desert.

My heart thumped painfully. I confess I felt afraid. Truly I had reason.

The man who had interrupted the Duke's conversation with Belinda at so critical a moment was Stanley Forbes!

He had sought the Duke—I knew it, I felt it—on account of Sheila Kenwyn. Stanley was a strong man, on occasions a ruthless one. Eastacres would be as nothing in his hands. I shook at the thought of what might happen. The scandal of an open quarrel between the two men would jeopardise, if not prevent Belinda's marriage; my plans would come to naught.

I could not tranquilly face such a possibility. For my own sake I must at all costs save the Duke from Stanley's wrath.

The two men paused in the moonlight. There was a dangerous look on Stanley's face, a look that frightened me. He meant mischief to Eastacres, and I, a mere woman, how could I hope to stop him?

I went forward and stood trembling between them.

(The result of Lady Peggy's interference will be told next Tuesday.)

He: "So the engagement is at an end?" She: "Yes." He: "Who broke it?" She: "The minster who married us."

"Then, Marie, you don't love me any longer?" "No, dear. I can only be a sister to you for the future." "A real true sister?" "Yes." "Ah, then lend me a sovereign."

"What's the matter, Brush? You look sad." "I am sad. I decorated a set of soup plates for Mrs. Hoodelle, and what do you suppose she did with them?" "Give it up. What?" "Used them for soup."

He waxed eloquent over his *fiancée's* beauty. Her eyes were lustrous, her nose fine, her lips a theme for the poet. "And her teeth?" interrupted his friend. "Teeth," he murmured rapturously, "like those of a newly-born babe!"

Two soldiers lay under their blankets looking up at the stars. Jack: "What made you go into the army, Tom?" Tom: "Well, I had no wife, and I loved war, Jack, so I went. What made you go?" Jack: "Well, I had a wife, and I loved peace, Tom, so I went."

The Rejected One (after a painful pause): "I think, on the whole, I will accept your offer to be a sister to me; but on one condition." The Rejecting One: "What is it?" The Rejected One: "That you let me be your little brother. Then I can get even with some of my successors."

TARTAN COVER No. 6
Will Appear Next Week.

THE TARTAN WILL BE THAT OF MACDONALD OF SLEAT.

Don't miss it. **Don't miss it.**

Digitized by Google

AN UNSPOKEN ANSWER.

Or, Spoiling His Chances.

"Look here, Digby," observed Guy Maxwell to his chum, with that air of superiority which was peculiar to him, "there's only to-morrow left, and I must arrange to have a few minutes with Miss Lyttleton. She's the sort of girl who would make a fellow a real good wife. I rather think she likes me, and the fact that I am heir to a baronetcy, with a good income attached, will have some weight. I intend to have a try to-morrow."

Digby Grant blew out a cloud of smoke in order to hide the expression that crept over his face.

"That means," said Digby after a pause, "that you intend to propose to her to-morrow?"

"I don't see what other interpretation you can put on my words!" rejoined Guy, rather irritably. "You don't seem very bright to-day; you are tired after your walk. Your voice is a bit shaky. Have something to brace you up."

"No, thanks!" said Digby, forcing a laugh. "But go on."

"Well," continued Guy, "I have fallen in love with that girl. My life will not be a happy one if I do not win her! I have mentioned my intention to you, old fellow, because I wish to ask a favour."

"What is it?" inquired Digby, surprised. "I can't help you to win Grace—I ought to say, Miss Grace Lyttleton!"

"Yes, you can!" was the astonishing rejoinder. "I simply want you to keep out of the way. You see," pursued Guy, a trifle awkwardly, we are always together. Now, I can't propose to her with you by my side, so I want——"

"Oh, I'll clear out for the day!" agreed Digby. "You ought to get a good chance. I'm going to turn in now. You will have to-morrow entirely, and on the following morning we start for town. Good night!"

Digby Grant was not in a pleasant mood when he reached his own bedroom. He, too, was in love with Grace Lyttleton; he had been trying to arrive at a decision as to whether she cared for him or not—whether he would be likely to stand any chance if he proposed. He was not very well off, but nevertheless he could offer her a good home, and he was rising in his profession. Now, at the last moment, Guy had announced his intention of essaying the capture of Grace's hand and heart.

"I can't go behind his back," muttered Digby disconsolately, "so I must stand aside. Is she the sort of girl that would be captivated by the prospect of a title? I hardly think so, yet she may be in love with him, for women like a masterful man."

He pictured Grace Lyttleton as he had seen her that afternoon. A tender, sweet, loving and lovable girl; quiet and womanly; one who would make a perfect helpmeet, encouraging, soothing, and urging in times of trouble and illness, and filled with pride and delight when success crowned her husband's efforts. Guy Maxwell scarcely seemed the kind of husband for her; he was wilful, and his affection was of the passionate kind that does not endure; yet Grace might be in love with him, might be fascinated by him.

"I don't see that I have any right to interfere!" groaned Digby. "I must be off early, and go to—somewhere—for the day!"

He was true to his word, and Guy Maxwell watched for his opportunity. Miss Lyttleton was staying at the same hotel, where her father had taken a suite of rooms to accommodate himself, his daughter, and his young son, a boy of fourteen. Mr. Lyttleton thought it a bore to be compelled to spend two or three weeks away from his business, so he had letters sent on, and spent a fair proportion of his time in writing his instructions, talking to London on the telephone or reflecting over commercial problems in the smoking-room. Grace and Roy were left much to themselves, which was fortunate from Guy's point of view.

"The boy will be off somewhere, and she will be alone, so far as her relations are concerned," mused Guy, with great satisfaction. "I can manage to get her to a quiet spot somewhere inside or out, and the thing will be done."

He had to wait some time for his chance during the morning. Other gentlemen appeared to claim a goodly share of her attention, and she was playing tennis in the spacious grounds of the palatial hotel. Roy, too, seemed to be "dodging about," as Guy inelegantly phrased it, more than usual. However, the much-desired opportunity presented itself at last, and he found himself alone with Grace Lyttleton.

"May I have the pleasure of a walk and a talk with you in the garden, Miss Lyttleton?" he asked gallantly. "You must feel warm after that game, and the flowers are worth seeing. I am going away to-morrow, and I should like this last day of my stay here to be the happiest."

She glanced at him shyly, half frightened, but bowed and said briefly that she would like a walk among the flowers.

"I think she guesses what is coming!" said Guy exultantly to himself. "That makes my task easier!"

They went into the garden, and, after a few steps, he suggested that they should seat themselves on a rustic bench.

In spite of his masterful disposition, Guy felt a little nervous about beginning. He nerved himself, and said—

"Miss Lyttleton, I have asked you to come here because——"

"Oh, here you are!" chimed in a shrill voice. "Nice in here, isn't it? Got room for me?"

And Roy Lyttleton took a seat next to his sister.

"What do you think of Mr. Benson's play, Mr. Maxwell? Not up to much, is it?" asked the boy.

Guy made some kind of reply mechanically. He wished that young gentleman further, but he had to conceal his annoyance and be pleasant.

Guy Maxwell laid himself out to make another opportunity for the afternoon. He suggested to Roy that there was good scenery for an amateur photographer in the neighbourhood of Rookham, about three miles away, and that the day was a perfect one; Roy appeared to catch at the idea, and Guy was hopeful.

Guy felt just a trifle mean at the thought of spying on Miss Lyttleton in order to discover which way she went for a walk, but he did it, and was rewarded by seeing her alone on the cliffs.

"This is a fortunate meeting, Miss Lyttleton!" he declared, raising his hat. "Suppose we go to the base of that cliff? There is a pretty nook, invisible from here, and it would form a pleasant afternoon excursion. Don't you think so?"

Grace Lyttleton murmured that it might be so, but she was afraid to undertake any climbing on account of the fatigue.

"It is really very good of you to take so much trouble to

make my stay agreeable, Mr. Maxwell," she said charmingly, "but I fear that it is a thankless task for you."

She looked at him with a strange expression, which he interpreted favourably. He stretched out his hand to take hers.

"I'm going to Rookham to-morrow or the next day, Mr. Maxwell!" said a well-known voice behind him.

Guy nearly uttered a rude exclamation, but he smothered it, and resigned himself to the loss of another opportunity.

The evening alone remained, and Guy vowed that, by hook or by crook, he would have his answer then. There was a ball that evening, so he would certainly get Grace alone at one portion of the entertainment. Roy would be in bed, that was one thing to be thankful for, and old Lyttleton was nobody.

He secured three or four dances, carefully selected by himself for convenient times, and felt certain of victory.

"She knows what to expect!" he murmured several times. "She's shy and restrained, which is a good sign."

When his first dance with her was over, he tried to lead her away to the conservatory, but her next partner claimed her.

The second dance was before the interval, so he was safe from the intrusion of the next partner. Without asking her, he led her away to a quiet spot; she appeared reluctant, but he paid no heed. If he lost this chance——!

"Miss Lyttleton—Grace! I must tell you!" he began, losing no time in preliminaries. "I cannot——"

"I say, it's late for me to be up, sis, and dad is cross! Do you think that Mr. Maxwell——? Oh, that *is* Mr. Maxwell!"

Roy looked as though he had said too much. Guy was on the point of telling him to clear off when Grace spoke.

"I am afraid father will be cross, Roy, but I must take the blame. I'll go and find him and explain. You will excuse me, won't you, Mr. Maxwell?"

She was gone before he had time to realise the fact. He gazed sternly at Roy; if he could get that young rascal out of the way, there would still be a chance after one of the other dances.

"Roy," said Maxwell impressively. "I want to have a quiet talk with your sister, and you come in every time. See here, I'll give you this half-crown if you'll go to bed—go anywhere and leave us!"

Roy's face lighted up and his arm began to stretch itself in the direction of the piece of silver; then his face grew sombre and he shook his head.

"That would be treachery," he explained. "Grace told me this morning that she expected you would try and say something to her if you were with her alone, and she didn't want you to. So she gave me a shilling to keep near her all day, so as you shouldn't have a chance, and I agreed. I'll stick to the bargain, even if I lose by it!"

Maxwell paled.

"Did she tell you why she didn't wish me to speak to her?" he asked, as an idea crossed his mind.

"Yes," admitted the boy. "She said she didn't want to hurt your feelings by saying something you wouldn't like, so it would be better to prevent you from saying anything to her. Girls are funny, aren't they?"

"Roy," said Maxwell, after a pause, "I understand now. I'll give you this half-crown on condition that you say nothing whatever about this chat we've had."

"Done!" exclaimed the boy, and the money changed hands.

"So that's my answer!" groaned Maxwell, as he made his way to his room. "Yet it was kindly on her part to wish to spare me a refusal. A refusal! H'm! That must be pretty uncomfortable for a man to hear when he expects to be accepted! Yes, it was a strange way of doing it, but a well-meaning way. Now I understand her apparently shy glances. I'm off by the earliest train to-morrow. I wonder if she is in love, and whom she loves?"

His question was answered six weeks later by the announcement in the newspaper of the engagement of Miss Grace Lyttleton and Mr. Digby Grant, the rising young barrister.

George Day.

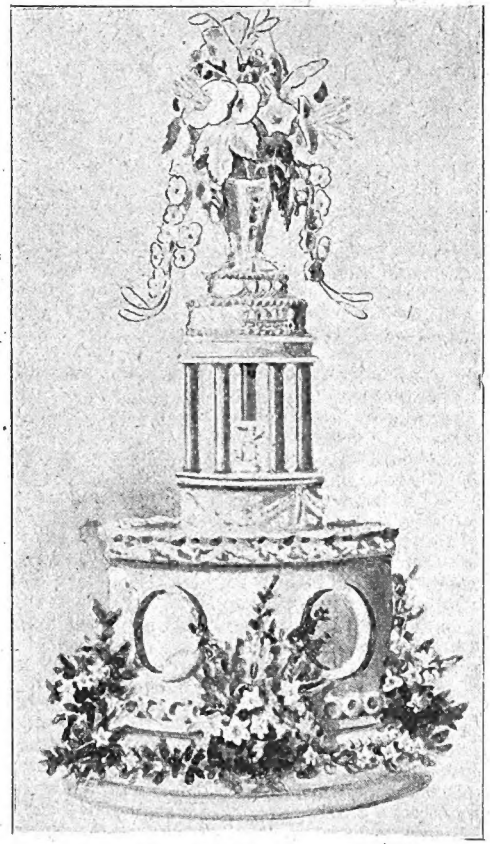
THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDE-CAKE

that we shall divide amongst 101 readers.

The lovely ornament at the top will go to one reader—perhaps you.

Miss Madge Morris will be married on Tuesday, December 2nd.

We shall purchase a big wedding-cake for Miss Morris,



and after the wedding festivities are over it will be cut up, put into boxes, and sent to certain readers of the paper.

Altogether, a hundred delicious pieces of cake will be sent out.

Moreover, the beautiful centre ornament from the top of the cake will also be offered as a prize.

The conditions under which you will be entitled to receive a piece are as follows:

All you have to do is to sit down and write a short congratulatory letter to Miss Morris on the auspicious occasion of her marriage. The reader who sends what Miss Morris considers to be the best letter will receive the beautiful centre ornament from the top, and the senders of each of the next hundred best will receive a piece of the cake.

Send your attempt to Miss Madge Morris, "Short Stories" Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., marking the envelope "Wedding" in the top left-hand corner, to arrive not later than Monday, December 1st.

Digitized by Google

Another Man's Love.

THE ROMANCE OF A SWIMMING GALA.

"Oh, hearts are fond and faith is frail, and the years are over-long,
And the man that loves another man's love, must do or suffer wrong."

PART I.

Tells How "Hearts Were Fond."

"WELL, I bet you a new hat Murray wins, and wins easily. Ask Cassie what she thinks, she has any number of gloves wagered on him—haven't you, Cassie?"

The girl addressed blushed and laughed, the laugh had a little echo of embarrassment in it. She was looking out over the strong iron railing near which she stood with her companions. Beyond, the long concrete wall of the hot white pier dropped to the level of the flat ripples that lapped at it sleepily. A tiny breeze fluttered her smart costume of butcher-blue drill and fanned the pink cheeks under the shady blue hat.

"I—I think Mr. Murray has a very good chance, papa," was her demure answer; "he is what I believe they call a popular tip. And I hope he wins, not only on account of my gloves, but because he swims so gracefully, not like our lumbering local champions."

"Trust a woman for being on the side of elegance," said her father; "however, in swimming, elegance is all in favour of speed, and I fancy Murray's chances myself for that reason, Vallance. But some people would prefer him in a hundred or two hundred yards sprint; he is lightly built in comparison with our fisher folk, and strength tells in five hundred yards and upwards."

"Whether yonder pretty jackanapes of an artist wins or not, Dr. Gibson," retorted the third person of the small group, "there's one man who, if he were here, would give him thirty yards and a beating. And that's my boy Ben."

Dr. Gibson glanced shrewdly at the tanned, grey-bearded face of the speaker, and noted the flash in the eyes under the peaked, gold-banded cap.

"Perhaps you're right, harbourmaster," he answered, soothingly. "Ben swims a good racing-stroke, though I don't suppose he's had much practice, at least not since he got command of the *Nova Scotian*."

The harbourmaster leant on the rail before him, biting his grizzled moustache.

"That's as maybe," he rejoined, "but I'd back him to beat this whipper-snapper, any day of the week. He's a man, is my boy, and let Cassie here remember it."

Cassie Gibson shrugged her shoulders almost imperceptibly—her father was adjusting a pair of binoculars and did not notice it. But Eli Vallance did, and the scowl grew on his weather-beaten visage as he bent his gaze upon a distant barge, moored at the head of the still, land-locked harbour, whose waters shimmered under the westering sun. Around it, on wharf and pier and foreshore, on masts and spars and standing rigging, was gathered a crowd of eager spectators.

"They're ready for the start," said Dr. Gibson, peering through his glasses and fumbling meanwhile to unhook from his guard a fine stop-watch; "take this Cassie, and time them when I cry 'off!'"

His daughter secured the watch, put a finger-tip on the stop-lever, and waited.

"Off!" exclaimed the doctor. At the starter's signal four figures had dived from the deck of the barge, and four heads, one brown, three fair, with the fairness of the southern shiresmen, were visible upon the sapphire surface of the harbour. Cassie had touched the stop-lever and the long seconds-hand of her father's chronometer was flitting upon its way as four arms showed themselves intermittently in the powerful swing of the overhand racing-stroke.

The on-lookers regarded the contest silently, and then a sudden shout went up. Two of the fair heads had drawn clear of the other—the brown head imitated them.

"Aha!" said Dr. Gibson approvingly. "Murray's no fool, he's letting his rivals make the pace. Do you see, Cassie, he's swimming on his right side to watch them—it's lucky for him he's equally good on both. By Jove, child, you're correct—he is a pretty swimmer. No splashing or blowing, and his strokes carry him half as far again as those of his competitors—he cuts the water like a fish."

"I'll take your bet about the hat, doctor," observed the harbourmaster slowly; "he'll give out at three hundred yards."

"Done," assented the doctor, gazing critically through his binoculars. "Here they come past us, Cassie. Bravo, Murray, bravo!"

His big voice rang out cheerfully as the swimmers went down the harbour, two of the fair-haired south countrymen out of it, the brown head keeping abreast of the remaining competitor coolly enough. Yet there was something desperately exciting about the fierce energy with which the strokes were made by the powerful arms, one white as a woman's, one leather-hued with tan.

Cassie Gibson could hear her heart beat loudly as she stared at the ruffled water and saw the dark, clean-shaven face of Joscelyn Murray, a quiet smile upon it and a determined gleam in the wet hazel eyes. Swift and true his left arm swung in the mighty racing-stroke, and his slight, yet muscular figure hurtled under its impetus towards its goal.

Fifty yards from the judges' boat his opponent spurted—the fair head distanced the brown one. The shouting broke out again—and hushed, the artist had spurted, too. The leading swimmers drew level and, for an instant, hung side by side. Then an interval began to open between them—the spectators cheered them wildly, madly, vociferously. But the fight was already ended, the brown head had reached the judge's boat, the white arms were flung over the edge, the dripping, dark features were shaking themselves free of the sea water.

"Won by half a dozen lengths," said Dr. Gibson, pocketing his glasses, and consulting the watch in Cassie's fingers, "time, eleven minutes, twenty-five seconds. Harbourmaster, I take six and three-eighths; Cassie, my dear, you will have sufficient gloves for months."

He put his watch back on to its chain and chuckled. "I win several little cash bets," he added, "with your per-

Digitized by Google

mission, Cassie, I'll go and collect them. Good day, harbourmaster."

"Good day, doctor, good day," growled Eli Vallance, and Dr. Gibson shouldered his way out of the crowd, a sturdy, middle-aged figure in a linen jacket and a Panama. But the harbourmaster stayed to put a heavy hand on Cassie Gibson's wrist.

"Cassie, my lass," he said. "I'm loth to do you a wrong, and it may be that you don't mean aught. Yet the whole port is talking about you and this artist fellow. You've been walking and talking and riding and boating together, for a matter of a month. If it wasn't for Ben it'd be none of my business, but you're promised to be my boy's wedded wife. The *Nova Scotian* is due any day. Supposing I was to let Ben know, when he gets back, how you've been philandering with Mr. Joscelyn Murray."

"I don't care, I'm sure," responded Cassie proudly. But her head drooped, nevertheless.

Eli Vallance pulled his peaked cap hard over his brows. "Maybe not," he replied hoarsely, "but it'd break Ben's heart, and he might break yonder young fool's neck into the bargain."

"Mr. Murray," declared Cassie, haughtily, "is quite able to protect himself. And if everybody is talking about—about Mr. Murray and me, as you say they are, Ben will hear whether you tell him or not."

The harbourmaster gripped her wrist tightly. "Cassie," he murmured, "don't, for heaven's sake—don't spoil my boy's life. Ben was fond of you as a little lad, you were like brother and sister together. Now he's got his ship and can marry and settle down. Don't break his heart, Cassie, don't do it! I'm sorry if I spoke clumsily—I'm only a clumsy old man, but I love my boy. Say you've only been fooling with Murray, and I'll tell Ben that I watched it and laughed at it, whatever folks tell him."

There stood Cassie Gibson, a tall, distressful shape, gazing out at the wreck.

Cassie released herself and looked down into the azure waters below.

"I—I—perhaps I have been fooling," she said, in a strange, quiet voice. "There, Ben shan't have anything to complain of, Mr. Vallance, I promise you."

Eli Vallance coughed awkwardly. "Don't remember it against me, lass," he pleaded. "My—my speaking about it. I expect there was no need, but Ben's my only child, Cassie, and—and he loves you better than he does me. Well, I'll be off, Cassie, you've taken a load from my mind, you have indeed."

Cassie Gibson sighed heavily as the harbourmaster stepped over the railing and went along the edge of the breakwater.

She herself did not move from the spot, but stood, trifling with her parasol, and biting at her delicate underlip. At length she was roused from her reverie.

"Well, Miss Gibson," said a pleasant, masculine voice, "I managed to win you your gloves, you see."

The doctor's daughter turned. Joscelyn Murray had come unperceived along the pier—now relieved of its crowd, for the five hundred yards scratch race had been the last event of the swimming gala—and paused by her, a modest, personable young Englishman in grey flannels and a straw "boater." He was rather more like a lawyer than an artist, save for the soft, somewhat dreamy expression of his dark eyes. His curly brown locks were still damp with the sea water.

Cassie did not meet his glance. "Yes," she answered, "it was quite exciting—papa waxed positively enthusiastic."

The artist laughed and leant on the rail near her. The sun was westering fast and the small sea-port of Meols—pronounced by the natives as Mells—was all aglow with the last of a glorious afternoon. In its compact, picturesque bay a white-winged pleasure-yacht or two, under a press of canvas, tacked hither and thither, and wandering rowboats crept about it like water-beetles. Meols was a lovely corner of the south-west coast, and Joscelyn Murray might have been forgiven, on purely professional grounds, his prolonged stay within its straggling borders.

The painter was putting a thumb and finger into a vest-pocket. He drew out a short strip of narrow pink ribbon, rather damp and woebegone.

"I did as I said I would," he remarked with a smile in which a certain grave tenderness was mingled, "carried my lady's favour to victory. I'm afraid it was a trifle conspicuous, tied on my wrist, but probably no one noticed it. By-the-bye, you never told me you forgave me for stealing it."

"I'm not so sure that I do," rejoined Cassie. "I may have some difficulty in matching the shade, and, besides, you tore the chiffon of my ruffle in pulling that streamer off it."

"I'm sorry," said the artist penitently, "especially as I wanted to ask your advice about something. That confounded prize I've won—it's a silver tea-service, presented by a local tradesman. I've no use for a silver tea-service, and I thought perhaps that you would—that you might——" Cassie Gibson cut swiftly into his sentence.

"I couldn't think of it, Mr. Murray," she assured him, a fraction of severity in her tone, "such a present would be too valuable for me to receive—except as a wedding-present, and as you are merely an acquaintance of my father's and do not in the least know Captain Vallance, I—I fear——"

Joscelyn Murray was staring at her amazedly. "Cassie—Miss Gibson," he gasped, "what in Heaven's name——"

Cassie turned away, yet he heard the sob that rose in her throat. "It's quite true," she said, "forgive me my unceremonious fashion of breaking the news. But I am really to be married one of these days—a woman's usual fate, after all—to Captain Vallance. He is our harbourmaster's son, and commands a Meols vessel, the *Nova Scotian*."

The artist twisted the bit of ribbon round his finger. "I—I congratulate Captain Vallance," he responded, and there was a bitter note in his voice. "I shall hope—notwith-

Digitized by Google

HAVE YOU ENTERED OUR WEDDING COMPETITION? SEE PAGE 647.

standing my lack of acquaintance with your future husband — to be allowed to — to dance at your wedding. Luckily one doesn't have to dance with one's heart, only with one's feet."

A second sob came to his ears. He held out the bit of ribbon. "I ask your pardon for this piece of folly," he said; "our friendship has been very pleasant to me."

Cassie made no motion to take the damp little strip. "Thank you," she faltered, averting her head, "I—I do not deserve such a friend." She raised her hand to her long lashes, as if to wipe away a tear. "Here is dad coming for me," she added. "I—I think I will go and meet him."

Joscelyn Murray assented mechanically, but his fingers sought hers. Two hands encountered and clasped lingeringly. The next moment Joscelyn Murray had slipped out of sight down a flight of landing-steps, to escape an interview with the genial, sharp-eyed doctor, and to stand for some time, twisting the scrap of moist ribbon and biting his lip. The victory to which he had borne the little favour had suddenly become as dust and ashes in his mouth.

PART II.

Shows That "Faith Was Frail."

"MR. MURRAY! MR. MURRAY!—just a moment, sir!"

A door swung slowly inwards and the artist appeared. He was dressed in pyjamas, a big meerschaum pipe was balanced between his fingers, those of the other hand held a book, and his brown hair was ruffled picturesquely.

"Dear, dear, sir!" said his disturber, a red-cheeked, red-nosed man in a collarless shirt, unbraced pantaloons, and down-at-heel slippers; "what a time of night, or rather morning, to be sitting up. I made no doubt you'd be asleep."

Joscelyn Murray coloured and looked down ostentatiously at his book as he stepped out on to the landing of the little seaside hotel.

"I was trying to read," he answered, "I had an attack of sleeplessness. Is anything wrong?"

"There's a barque ashore in the bay, sir," he was told, "I fancied perhaps you'd like to see them launch the lifeboat."

The artist threw his book back into the room and began to unbutton his sleeping-jacket.

"By Jove I should, landlord," he said, "they might want someone to pull an oar."

The landlord of the Regatta Hotel shook his head and snuffed thoughtfully a candle he carried. "They've a full crew," he responded, "and reserves—there's no call for such as you to risk their lives, sir."

"My life," exclaimed the artist, "is a very useless, purposeless thing, Bateson, and well worth risking on any decent excuse. But I must see the launch, whatever happens."

He went in to fling some clothes on, leaving Mr. Bateson to carry off himself and his candle in a species of bewilderment, so unexpectedly bitter had been his guest's retort.

Joscelyn Murray donned a thick sweater and a pair of rough trousers. "Perhaps they'll let me go in the lifeboat if I insist," he muttered, as he put a mackintosh loosely over his garments, "it would be a good end if—if there were any accidents. I'm only in the way now—in Cassie's way."

The artist picked up something from his toilet table. It was the bit of pink ribbon and he tied it upon his wrist once more. "My lady's favour," he murmured, and the words sounded like a sneer.

Catching up a cap, he ran down the creaking stairs and out of the hotel. The landlord followed him and they went along the sea-front together. A storm had burst over Meols with the first flush of the dawn, and in the wan daylight the great waves from the bay were thundering across the little esplanade. Out to sea, just where an ugly reef formed, at low water, a flat black island, were the three masts, two of them square-rigged, of a smart modern barque. A fluttering rag or so of canvas on her foremast showed that what sail she had dared to leave set in her attempt to beat off-shore against the sudden storm, had been blown from the bolt ropes.

"She's thought to be a Meols ship, sir," shouted the landlord in the artist's ear; "the *Nova Scotian*—old Eli Vallance's son is skipper of her, she was reported past the Lizard this morning, it seems."

An exclamation burst from Joscelyn Murray's lips. "Captain Vallance!—the *Nova Scotian!*" he cried, "why——"

He stopped, recollecting Mr. Bateson's presence. But an uncontrollable thrill ran over him as he realised that upon that wave-lashed hull, out there in the wild green seas, was the man who stood between him and Cassia Gibson.

His companion pressed on and the artist kept abreast of him. The lifeboat house fronted the bay from the inner edge of the esplanade. They reached it to find a team already harnessed to the ponderous carriage and straining it down the concrete slope. At the top of the beach her crew got into her—Meols fashion—big and bearded men in cork jackets, oilskins and sou-westers. A crowd of fisher-folk ranged themselves to push at the laden carriage—Joscelyn Murray noticed that Dr. Gibson was aiding them unassumingly—the whip of the teamster cracked, and the bulky vessel was thrust towards the furious sea. The artist caught his breath as he wondered what would be the result of the battle between that handful of men and the elements—an awful hope had sprung up in his heart. He banished it with a shudder.

Suddenly a cry rose from the margin of the thundering waves. A huge roller, washing far in-shore, had caught the laden boat, lifted her from her carriage, filled her, and dropped her upon it again—transversely, so that she rolled into the surf. Joscelyn Murray started from his absorption and hastened down the beach.

The crew of the lifeboat were struggling back to the shore, borne up by their cork jackets, the boat herself wallowed like a wounded creature in the waves. A hundred willing hands seized and dragged her up. Another shout arose—a shout of alarm and dismay that made itself heard high above the howling of the storm. A horrified murmur went round among the helpers on the beach.

"She's broken her back, sir," said a voice by the artist. He looked and saw the landlord of the Regatta Hotel—whitefaced and dripping, Mr. Bateson had already thrown himself into the contest with the storm.

"Wouldn't have believed it possible if anyone had told me," added the landlord, gaspingly. "Well, they'll have to try a rocket and the breeches buoy. But the nearest rocket-brigade is at Frisby, five miles off, where they've no life-boat, and no telegraph or telephone either, worse luck. We'll have the brigade here as quickly as my best horses and a brake can fetch them, and that'll not be much under an hour, everything else serving."

He panted away in pursuit of the harbourmaster. Eli Vallance had just passed them, his cap gone, his white hair fluttering in the wind.

"Rockets be——!" he swore, at the landlord's first words; "the barque will begin to go to pieces in no time if this sea lasts. But we're not beaten yet."

The harbourmaster turned to the crowd of fisher-folk and threw up his hands appealingly.

"Lads," he cried, "I want volunteers—we'll try for her in a gig. You know who are yonder—your own sons and brothers and one of the finest skippers that ever sailed, my boy Ben."

"It is useless, my poor friend," said a pitiful voice—Dr Gibson had come up the beach and stood beside the white

Digitized by Google

locked, desperate figure, "if the lifeboat can't cope with a sea like that, what will happen to a cockle-shell?"

Eli Vallance laughed wildly. "You're a coward, Gibson," he exclaimed, "a rotten coward. But the men of Meols are no cowards—look lively, lads, there's no time to be lost."

A bronzed form or two stepped forward dauntlessly, but the rest faltered. "It's throwing life away," said one, "I'd chance mine with any man, but I've a wife and young children. It's suicide, Mr. Vallance."

A wail burst from the harbourmaster. "Cowards! cowards!" he cried, "and here's my boy's betrothed and many another lass to call you so."

Joscelyn Murray touched the excited old man upon the arm. The artist had seen Cassie Gibson suddenly, a tall, distressful shape, wrapped in a long cloak and gazing out at the wreck, a group of rough women near her. A lump rose in his throat and a pang of jealousy cut him to the heart. It was lost in a nobler impulse and he found himself interrupting the bitter denunciation of the harbourmaster.

"Mr. Vallance," he said, "there is another way, let me try it."

Eli Vallance lifted his head, the tears were running down his withered cheeks. "You!" he exclaimed.

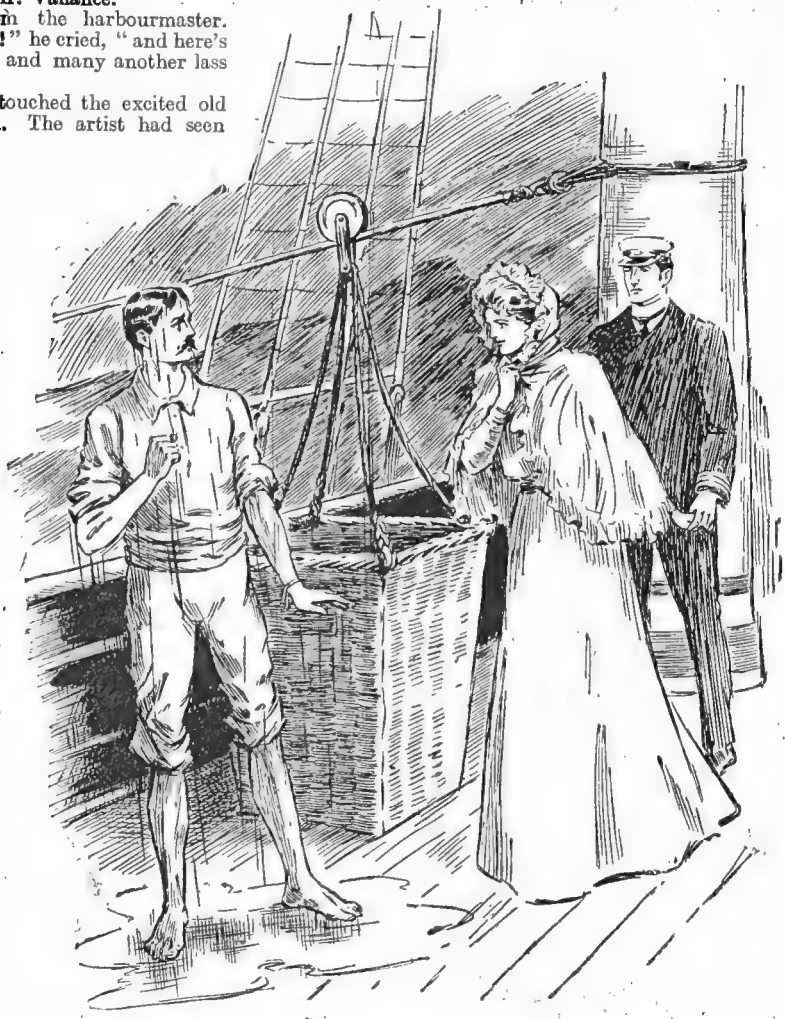
"Yes," answered Joscelyn Murray, "I'll swim out with a line. I—I can do it, by diving through the rollers."

A murmur of admiration and dissent ran round the throng on the beach. "The rocks, sir, the rocks!" said an old fisher-wife; "you'd be battered to death, dive or not."

The artist threw aside his mackintosh and pushed off his shoes. "The middle of the bay is all sand," he rejoined, "she's struck just over the bar and that's sand, too, of course. There's a chance. Give me a line—the best and lightest you have."

With anxious faces and almost reluctant haste they brought the long, fine cord and arranged it skilfully that he might pay it out as he went instead of dragging it from the shore. The harbourmaster wrung his hand, but Dr. Gibson frowned.

"Madness! madness!" he said. There was a little cry, the echo of his own melancholy tone, and Cassia, standing by him, reeled and fainted in her father's arms. Joscelyn Murray had mounted the disabled lifeboat as she lay lifting to the surf, ran along the sloping gunwale, and leapt far out into the rollers



The captain led her forward. "My wife," he explained. "Your what?" cried Joscelyn in astonishment.

The pathetic feminine cry and swoon passed unnoticed by the majority of the helpers on the beach. With breathless tension, straining their vision through the grey morning, they waited for a glimpse of the daring swimmer. A moment, another, and yet another slipped away and then a sigh burst from every bosom. The artist's head had emerged, visible for an instant to those upon the higher ground of the beach. Then it was lost again in the swirling green seas.

"He'll not do it," said the landlord of the Regatta Inn; "a pity, a great pity, he is a brave fellow." And Mr. Bateson gazed wistfully at the turbulent surface of the bay. Many an eager glance was focussed on the angry billows, but nobody contradicted the pessimistic Mr. Bateson.

Meanwhile, Joscelyn Murray, progressing by a series of long dives and aided by the now changed run of the tide, was nearing the sandy bar of the small bay. Soon he had to forge athwart the set of the current and it tried him to the utmost. Beaten, buffeted, smothered in a whirl of glassy, foam-flecked billows, he struggled on, husbanding his strength as far as he might for the contest with the breakers that hammered upon the good ship *Nova Scotian*. He dared not dive any more, but allowed the rollers to carry him forward, treading water to peer over their tops.

At length a giant wave hurled him forward and he felt a shock that numbed him in every limb. He had been dashed against the reef on which the barque had struck. Above him he could see the hull and quivering masts of the vessel, enveloped to her main-top in clouds of driven foam. But the shock to the daring swimmer had been critical, it had enfeebled, if not injured him—a sense of lethargy crept over the artist, a retreating roller dragged him back, to fling him again upon the reef.

Unexpectedly he was seized in a pair of strong arms. A big and powerful swimmer had dived far out over him from the deck of the vessel and risen behind him, to grasp the artist dexterously. A rope was bound about the waist of the rescuer, it tightened and they were drawn up into the barque.

Finding his feet on the listing deck of the vessel, Joscelyn Murray shook out the last few coils of the line he had brought

Digitized by Google

from the shore, and lashed it to the mainmast. Then he looked about him with a certain curiosity.

His rescuer clapped him on the back. "You are a brave fellow and no mistake," the artist was told, "we'd almost lost hope when we saw the lifeboat go wrong.

Joscelyn Murray dashed a trickle of water out of his eyes and surveyed the speaker—there was something about him that recalled the tanned and wrinkled features of the harbour-master.

"This is the *Nova Scotian?*" he asked. The other nodded; he was a bluff, fair-haired Englishman.

"Hamburg to Meols," he pursued, "and I'm her skipper, worse luck, Captain Vallance—my dad is harbourmaster here."

"Quite so," said the artist, coldly; "well, suppose we get this line in and rig up a substitute for the breeches buoy. The sooner we're all ashore the better."

His curt advice was promptly acted upon and ten minutes later a stout rope had been stretched between the shore and the ship, with a basket and hauling-tackle upon it. The means of escape were complete.

"Ladies first," observed the captain of the *Nova Scotian*, and he motioned invitingly to a closely-wrapped, yet obviously girlish figure that had been watching interestedly the procedure of rigging the impromptu device. "My wife," he added explanatorily, and with a sailor-like courtesy, for a brief inspection of the artist had convinced him that the latter was no common long-shoreman or Meols fisher.

Joscelyn Murray leapt an inch into the air. "Your what?" he cried.

"My wife," repeated the captain, as he glanced affectionately into a blonde, pleasant face, blue-eyed and blushing. "Sweet ending to a runaway honeymoon trip, isn't it. Luckily Gretchen is a sailor's child herself and doesn't know what fear means. But won't the old man give me a keelhauling for marrying a Dutch lass." And he sighed as he helped his pretty partner into the basket that swung from the suspended cable.

* * * * *

Captain Benjamin Vallance was right. The "keelhauling"—which is maritime slang for a warm quarter of an hour—was duly performed by the indignant, if relieved harbour-master, who was, however, persuaded ultimately to welcome the little Dutch girl as his daughter-in-law, much to the gallant captain's gratification.

"Sorry to give you all such a surprise, dad," said that person the next day, after a long talk with Joscelyn Murray and another with Cassie Gibson, "but I loved Gretchen and she loved me, and I knew Cassie didn't and never would. So I exploded all that boy-and-girl nonsense by getting married in Hamburg. And a nice ending my honeymoon trip would have had if it hadn't been for Mr. Murray. But bless you, Gretchen and I have got it out of Cassie that she's not particularly sorry to be rid of me. So here's their healths." And he lifted the glass that stood at his elbow.

"Whose healths?" demanded his father irritably.

"Cassie's and Mr. Murray's," said the skipper of the *Nova Scotian*, "and may he come as safely through the stormy seas of matrimony as he did through those of Meols Bay."

And Captain Benjamin Vallance drank his own toast with enthusiasm.

R. Norman Silver.

PHILANTHROPIST: "Look here, my man, didn't I give you sixpence last night to get a bath?" Tramp: "You did, yer honour, but I tried it before, an' you get just as dirty again!"

A FRENCH lady, of very elegant figure, was recently asked why she always had such enormously stout servants. Her answer was characteristic: "To prevent them wearing my clothes when I am away from home."

"JANETTE, I'm afraid you're a vain little wife. You gaze into your mirror so much." "You oughtn't to blame me for that. I haven't your advantage." "What's that?" "You can see my face without looking into a mirror."

Is Your Birthday This Week?

We have recently secured the services of a well-known astrologer, and below will be found his information for this week's birthdays.

November 18.—An unfavourable year for those whose birthdays fall here. Much competition and annoyance in business and over home affairs.

Girls will have many minor troubles in love matters.

The day is evil for marriage, pleasure, signing papers, and dealing with superiors.

A child born here will be careless, romantic, and moody; will not have a fortunate life.

November 19.—A mixed year is promised; Health will need extra care. More than usual activity and some pleasant events in home circle.

Young girls will find love affairs very interesting; if engaged they marry.

The day is good for dealing with opposite sex. Evil for doing business with landlords and farmers.

A child born to-day will be active, affectionate, and clever.

November 20.—Rather a fortunate birthday; those in employ are promoted. Insure against fire and mishap.

Love affairs go favourably, and girls become engaged or marry.

The day is good for asking favours, marriage, and doing business with governmental bodies.

A child born here will be ambitious, fond of change and adventure.

November 21.—An unfortunate year for business, and finances. Beware of law, and have a care in signing papers.

Girls born near 4 p.m need caution and prudence in dealing with the opposite sex.

The day is unfavourable for most things. Don't speculate, sign agreements, nor lend to friends.

A child born this day will be unsettled, improvident, and unfortunate in most matters.

November 22.—A trying year; sickness in domestic circle; health will need care; those in employ are in danger of losing it.

Girls will meet with deceit from opposite sex.

The day is evil for marriage, visiting, engaging servants and asking favours.

A child born to-day will be idle, careless and often without employment. If a girl the health will be poor.

November 23.—The year will be full of change; much travelling and movement.

Girls born near 5 or 6 p.m. receive attentions from married men and should beware of deceit.

A child born here will be stubborn, moody, and malicious. Will be fond of travel, and subject to accident.

November 24.—Good and evil come into the following year. Be cautious in buying and selling. Some pleasant events in domestic circle.

Girls will receive attentions and become engaged or marry: a good year to visit and seek introductions.

The day is good for asking favours, and dealing with those in authority.

A child born here will be ambitious, affectionate, and will rise in life.

Asturel.

Digitized by Google

A Juggler's Daughter.

The Story of a Dark Cloud and a Silver Lining.

1882.

"Doctor Beckett?"

"Yes, what do you want?"

"I want you to come with me to a dying man!"

"Who is it?"

"No one you know, doctor. No one living in the place, I mean."

"But I don't know *you!* Ah! I have it now. You belong to one of the travelling shows, just come in for the fair."

"You've hit it, guv'nor! That's me."

"Well, is the sick man also a van-dweller?"

"Yes. It's old Joey Baretta, the juggler! He's struck for death, and wants to see you."

"To see me? It must be a mistake. I have never heard of him."

"It's no mistake; for the old 'un had got your name as pat as mine, and I've knowed him more nor a year or two."

"Well, I'll go with you. Just wait a minute while I put up a few things. Baretta—never heard the name in my life."

The flashily-dressed, shabby-looking individual, who had knocked up Dr. Miles Beckett just before dawn, on a raw, dark morning in October, was not a person likely to inspire confidence in a staid country practitioner, not too well versed in the ways of the world.

The doctor had a prejudice—a deep-rooted prejudice—against folks of this kidney, and even in broad daylight gave them a wide berth.

But the man's assertion of Baretta's knowledge of, at least his name, puzzled him, and roused in him a strange feeling of curiosity.

"It's a good step," said the doctor's guide, by way of apology. "That Parson-Squire of yours keeps us well outside. Won't let us come within touchin' distance, if he can help it. Hates show folk, he does."

"Yes, he's not a bad judge," replied the other, with a dry cough. "But this man, Baretta, is he married—has he any family?"

"Well, it's like this 'ere—his wife's dead—a toff she was, he run away with her, and he's got one young 'un, a girl, four years old."

"Ah, this is the place, I suppose?" said the doctor, as they stumbled into a tangle of vans, tents, tethered horses, and all the scattered, ragged and dirty paraphernalia of a stroller's encampment.

"Nat!" said a voice out of the darkness, and apparently proceeding from a large van, the windows of which showed a dim light, through the grimy blinds, "Got the doctor? The old man's nearly gone. He's bin callin' for you this arf 'our or more."

"All right, doctor's here. You keep outside till I tells you."

On the lowermost bunk in the hot, stifling van lay a man, evidently prematurely old. His hair was grey, his features drawn and ashen white.

Doctor Beckett lost no time, but went down to look at him.

"Here, the light—you!" said the doctor sharply to his guide. "I thought so."

Filling a small pocket-glass with brandy, he put his arm under the sick man's head, lifted him slightly, and made him drink the spirit.

It was at this moment that the doctor was conscious of another presence.

Half hidden by the curtain at the bed-head, he could just make out in the gloom a little figure, a girl-child, whose large round eyes were fixed in terrified intensity upon the face of the dying man.

"You sent for me!" he said to the latter. "Have I seen you before? Do you know me?"

"Yes, I know you, but you have never seen me," was the whispered reply.

"I don't understand."

"Your sister—doctor—Ivy——"

"What do *you* know of *her*, man?" cried Dr. Beckett, startled out of himself. "My sister disappeared years ago! What of her?"

"She—she died—when this little one was born."

"You are dying!" the doctor responded, with almost brutal frankness. "You would not, you could not deceive yourself or me with such a statement, if it were not true."

"It *is* true!" came with laboured articulation. "In those days I was just from Milan, young, famous, rich! I saw your sister at Liverpool. I loved her—she loved me, and, Heaven forgive me if I did wrong! I persuaded her to marry me and to cast in her lot with me."

"Yes, yes, and then?"

"Then," went on the dying man with ever-increasing gasps for breath—"then was the happiest time of all my life. One, two, three children were born and died; and now, come closer—I cannot see you—now—my—my little Ivy—my baby. I go from her."

The child heard and understood. Throwing herself across her father's breast, in an abandonment of grief, she kissed his thin, pale cheeks, beseeching him—crying bitterly the while—not to leave her.

Tenderly the doctor detached her arms from around Guiseppe Baretta's neck and lifted her away.

Sitting her on his knee, with her head against his shoulder, he spoke again.

"You are distressed for the child's future?" he said. "But why did you not send her to me when my—when your wife died?"

"Send her away!" was the almost fierce reply; the last flicker of the lamp of life. "My Ivy—the one thing in all the world I had to love me and to love!"

"Well—no—perhaps you could not. But listen. I will take her now. She is my own flesh and blood. We—my wife and I—have no children. She shall be to us as a daughter. Will that comfort, and content you?"

Guiseppe Baretta was beyond speech. His eyes rested for a second only upon the fair-haired child he was leaving, and with a satisfied smile upon his lips, he fell back dead.

* * * * *

1902.

The following extract is from the *Morning Post* of September 18th.

"Sir Randall and Lady Ivy Sandys have returned from the Austrian Tyrol, whither they went for their honeymoon.

"Lady Sandys, who it may be remembered, is the niece of Sir Miles Beckett, Physician-in-Ordinary to His Majesty, is one of the loveliest women in Society, and as popular as she is beautiful. The match was quite a romantic one. Sir Randall, with all the honours of the late campaign thick upon him, and being one of the most distinguished heroes of the hour; having won his wife, Othello-wise, as it were,

and for the sake of 'the dangers he had passed.' General Sir Randall Sandys, who has received a baronetcy, is quite twenty-five years the senior of Lady Ivy."

"Isn't it too bad?" said the lady, passing the paper to her husband across the table. "There is absolutely nothing sacred with editors nowadays!"

"It is one of the penalties of over-civilisation, I suppose," said the bronzed soldier opposite. "There is one thing, it breaks no bones, and we can afford to laugh at it."

They were at breakfast at Claridge's the morning after their arrival.

"As soon," continued Lady Ivy, "as I have safely packed you off, sir, to the War Office, I am going to see Uncle Miles."

"That's right, dear, and directly I have finished my business I will follow you."

Within the half hour the dainty little figure—not to be recognised as one with the grief-stricken child of twenty years before, watching the dying juggler, her father, in a stroller's van—tripped down the great staircase and into her brougham.

"Dear old uncle," she kept repeating to herself—her aunt had been dead for many years—"home would not be home without him!"

The drive was a short one across Oxford Street to Seamore Place, Park Lane.

The once obscure country doctor was now the famous and honoured specialist. A member of the reigning house had been practically saved by his skill, and the reward was a knighthood and a Court appointment.

From the night when he had taken his sister's child to his own home, he had loved her as a father; while she regarded him with, if possible, even greater affection.

As she grew up, she developed personal gifts that attracted round her half the fortune-hunters of London.

Not that Sir Miles Beckett was a millionaire or even an exceptionally wealthy man, but he was sufficiently rich for his niece and adopted daughter to be an object of consideration to impecunious matrimonial speculators.

Her early life with her father, all the squalor and the misery of an ever-deteriorating nomadic existence, gradually became but a dim memory; so that by the time she met with her life's hero, the past was practically forgotten. Ivy Beckett the famous physician's adopted child, and Ivy Baretta, the daughter of Guiseppe, or Joey Baretta, the Italian juggler, had, in the eyes of the world, nothing whatever in common.

With wedding presents from Royalty itself and from a large section of the upper ten thousand, Ivy Beckett's transformation into a successful general's wife, and a future Society leader, was but one more notable instance of Nature's delight in the exceptional and the rare.

As Ivy descended from the carriage at her uncle's door, she saw what she had failed in her excitement to notice before, that the coachman (the brougham was one of Sir Miles', sent by him for her use till she was settled) was grinning a recognition.

"Why, Plunkett!" she exclaimed, with a smile, "is that you? You don't look a bit altered!"

"Nor more do you, miss—my lady—I beg your ladyship's pardon!"

"That's all right, Plunkett! You and I have known each other for a few years. And has my uncle lent you to me?"

"Yes, my lady! He said he thought I'd take more care of you than the second coachman."

"Just like him, isn't it, Plunkett? You needn't wait. I'm going to stay all day with Sir Miles."

The meeting between uncle and niece was something neither would be likely to forget. He had missed her so, this lonely, prosperous man, and she, though her heart was now given to a husband, had looked forward to seeing him again with all the great love of a child for her father.

Later on, when the General joined the little family circle, it was a question whether a happier one existed in all England.

While the two were alone, however, Sir Miles was suddenly reminded by a chance remark of Ivy's of the death-bed scene of twenty years before.

"Uncle," she said, "have you not a picture, a trinket, or some little thing once owned by my mother which you could give me?"

"Why, of course I have, child! Your father the night he died gave me a packet, which, somehow, I have refrained from opening until now."

"Oh, fetch it dear, do! I think that I should be still happier than I am, if I could only see and touch something which belonged to—my mother."

He went and got it, and together they opened it.

There was a miniature of the first Ivy; a pathetic letter, written to her father, but never sent; her marriage certificate, and a ring. With these, was a letter addressed to Sir Miles, and which, reproaching himself for having so long neglected to read, he passed to the writer's daughter.

After a repetition of that which, when dying, he had told the doctor, he went on to say that "he had always desired, for the child's sake, to entrust her to her uncle's care, but that the temptation to have her near him was too great to be resisted. Finding himself in the neighbourhood where his wife's brother lived, and realising that his own end was near, he determined that he would lose no time in carrying out that which he knew to have been his wife's earnest desire.

"For two or three years now," he concluded, "things have gone from bad to worse with me, so that I can leave nothing to my little Ivy, save my prayers for her future happiness. Don't let her quite forget me, bless her!"

The letter ended abruptly here, but underneath, as an evident afterthought, were the words: "I have arranged with my two partners, Nat Ross and Charlie Townsend, that after my death the whole show—tent, vans, and horses—be sold; see that there is taken out of the proceeds enough to bury me decently. I want to lie with Ivy, my wife. Nat knows where."

Uncle and niece looked at one another, the thoughts of both going out to the grave of the strangely-assorted pair, who after the struggle and the storm lay calmly and peacefully side by side, at rest for evermore.

* * * * * * *

Once more it was fair time on the outskirts of the little county town, where we first met most of the people who figure in this little story.

The parlour of the "Bear" was fairly full about six in the evening.

There appeared to be something under discussion which was the cause of more than ordinary interest.

"Read that agen, Mister Plunkett!" said a grey-headed father of the hamlet.

"My son, ye see," repeated Mr. Plunkett, "as is up in Lunnon as coachman to Sir Miles Beckett—him as lived about 'ere nigh twenty year ago—'as sent me this paaper, the *Marnin' Poast*, which 'as a bit in it about the owd doctor and 'is niece."

Mr. Plunkett then proceeded to read the extract with which we are already familiar.

While he was reading it a poorly-dressed man, who was quietly sitting in a corner with some bread and cheese and a pint of beer, ceased from his eating and drinking, and listened intently.

"Beg pardin', mate," he said, when the other had finished, "did I understand you to say as Dr. Beckett, as used to live hereabouts is in London now?"

Mr. Plunkett looked the speaker up and down, and then apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, replied that it was the same.

"Do you know where he lives in London?"

"Well, seein' as my son 'as bin his coachman for nigh twenty-five year, I ought to."

"THE ALBERT GATE MYSTERY." Our New Serial will commence shortly.

Digitized by Google

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind tellin' me. I've something I wants bad to see him about."

"I dunno as I oughter; but I don't think as you can do 'e much 'aarm."

With the address in his pocket Nat Ross, old Joey Baretta's one time partner, prepared to tramp the sixty miles and odd to London.

"It ain't no 'arm to remind 'im or 'er of old days; an' me clean broke to the world. She's married, that's certain, but I don't think as she'll be fur away from the old doctor. Anyway I'll try my luck, for I've carried her in my arms 'undreds of times when she wer' fractious, an' old Joey didn't no more know what to do with her than a babby unborn."

* * * * * * *

It was a fashionable concert at St. James' Hall.

Scores of carriages were waiting in line to take up after it was over.

Hanging round the entrance in Regent Street, and closely scanning every lady's face that came out, was Nat Ross.

Earlier in the day he had just missed Ivy as she drove from Seamore Place, but managed to hear the butler's order for St. James' Hall.

For two hours or more he had patiently waited, unconscious that he was being watched by a pair of keen official eyes.

He would never have recognised her, of course, but for knowing which was her carriage.

"Lady Sandys' carriage!" shouted the commissionaire.

Up it dashed, and as its fair occupant put her foot upon the step, a voice spoke in her ear.

Frightened in spite of herself, for she was a brave little soul, Ivy gave a suppressed shriek.

At the same moment a heavy hand was laid upon the man's shoulder.

"What do you want with the lady?"

"Nothing."

"That's very likely."

"Let him go, policeman!" said Ivy, pleadingly. "He hasn't done me any harm."

"Very sorry, my lady, but this kind of thing's been going on for a good bit lately, and we've got orders to run the next man in."

It was all very unpleasant, for Ivy would have to appear at the police-court the following day and prosecute.

Before the case was called on, however, she was informed that the prisoner desired to see her. He was brought into a room, and the statement he then made was sufficiently impressive that upon Ivy's earnest appeal the magistrate allowed him to be discharged.

"I didn't mean no 'arm," he said, "I was starvin', and didn't know which way to look for a farthing. I thought as maybe you'd 'elp me, fur the sake o' old days. You an' me was friends. I was always staunch and true to yer father an' never wronged 'im of a penny."

Ivy was not one to conceal from her husband the fact of her mother's *mésalliance;* indeed, Sir Randall had no cause for complaint, seeing that his wife's mother was really Sir Miles Beckett's sister.

Fortunately, the circumstance did not get into the papers, so that no tongues were set a-wagging.

"Look here, my man!" said the General to Nat, the morning after his release from custody, "we want to do something for you. What would you like? You can either go down to my place in the country, and I'll find you a job there, or we'll set you up in something."

"That's it, sir," said Nat, "would it run to a little shootin' gallery to go round with? I could see my way to a good livin' that way."

"Very well, come up here to-morrow, and we'll see about it; meanwhile, go and get a lodging and something to eat."

"Randall," said Ivy, when the vagabond had gone, "I love you more than I did before, for you have helped an unfortunate to help himself, and, more than that, do not love me any the less because a poor juggler was my mother's husband and my father."

Ralph Enderby.

Your Editor Chats.

OLD readers of our little paper will remember a remarkably powerful serial story which ran some time ago, entitled "The Lost Lady Delia." It was from the pen of Louis Tracy, the great author who was responsible for the ever-to-be-remembered romance, "The Final War." Well, since that time I have been endeavouring to arrange for a new story by the same author, and have now succeeded in obtaining one entitled

"The Albert Gate Mystery."

The new story needs no further recommendation from me. Lovers of Mr. Tracy's works will know what they are going to get so far as interest is concerned, and those to whom he is yet unknown will have a very pleasant surprise in store. Next week I will tell you more about the new story.

MEANWHILE I would like to say a few words about

Miss Madge Morris' Marriage.

In a fortnight Miss Morris will be off on her honeymoon, and the big bride cake, about which so much has been heard, will have melted into a hundred pieces and scattered all over the country. Will *you* get a piece—for luck? I hope so; but, of course, you certainly won't unless you enter for the little competition announced elsewhere. If you can write a nice letter of congratulation, you stand a good chance of getting a piece of cake in return.

Several correspondents have written to say that they wish to send Miss Morris a little token of their respect on the occasion of her wedding, and wish to know if they shall address it to this office. While thanking such readers for their kind thoughtfulness, I regret to have to ask them not to forward any presents of any sort for Miss Morris. This is not said from any unkind motive; but circumstances into which we need not enter here prohibit anything of the kind. At the same time, Miss Morris asks me to thank most cordially all those who have expressed a wish to make her a little wedding gift, and she assures them that the receipt of a sincere letter will be appreciated by her as much as the most expensive present money can buy!

Those Gramophones!

BY the way, the first batch of Gramophones, now in the hands of the lucky owners, have brought me a shoal of congratulatory letters. The machines have given great satisfaction to everyone. They are well worth trying for—especially as the competitions in which they are offered are so very simple. Turn to page 659 and see how easily a brand new Gramophone may be yours.

Your Editor.

Result of the Second "Serial" Competition.

A GRAMOPHONE has been awarded to each of the following competitors:

LONDON.—A. Strike, 10 Jelf Road, Brixton, S.W.; A. Barnes, 21 S. Peabody Buildings, Stamford Street, S.E.

UNDER 100 MILES FROM LONDON.—W. Smith, 138 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone; E. Quaile, 83 Swallowfield Rd., Charlton.

OVER 100 MILES FROM LONDON.—Mrs. Bradbury, 547 Attercliffe Road, Sheffield; George Craine, 126 Buck's Road, Douglas, Isle of Man.

SCOTLAND.—James Scott, 111 North High Street, Musselburgh; J. Gillespie, 1216 Springburn Road, Glasgow.

IRELAND.—D. S. Jones, 69 Beechfield Street, Mountpottinger, Belfast; James May, H.M. Training Ship *Black Prince*, Cork Harbour.

The correct sentence ran as follows:

"*He had questioned the railway porter, and the man had jerked his thumb in the direction of her employer.*" **Page 486,** col. 2, line 64.

Digitized by Google

THE STORY OF THE WEEK: See our Coloured Cover.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

How a Pack of Cards Decided a Destiny.

I THINK very few girls in the world could have felt so lonely as I did when I left school to live with my father.

My mother had died long years before—mercifully for her, poor dear. I believe that even during the short time of her married life my father had contrived to break her heart; but my own recollections of her are very shadowy and dim, and I can only recall one picture of her with absolute certainty.

It is the picture of a fair, girlish face, worn with sorrow, white and weary with illness and misery; of a crown of golden hair, amongst which my childish fingers touched the silver threads, and of a voice broken with weeping.

But though the picture of her is faint, the words she spoke have remained firmly rooted in my mind for all time. She bent over my bed as she said them, and kissed my face with tender, lingering kisses.

"God guard you, my darling. Be a pure and noble woman, and never stoop to do anything your conscience tells you is wrong, even if the wrong seems expedient." Those were her words and sometimes I have wondered since whether, being so near to death, she foresaw something of what my future would be!

What a strange childhood mine was, after my mother's death. I wonder whether any other girl has ever known so varied and yet so lonely an existence.

As in a kaleidoscope I seem to see the shifting scenes of my child days fly past me.

Now we were rich, living in a big house with lots of servants, and a luxury that, as I look back upon it, strikes me as appalling in its lavishness.

Next we were in dismal lodgings in a London back street, waited upon by a grimy slavey, hard put to it to find the ordinary necessaries of life.

And finally would come a flying abroad, and a residence in one cheap Continental town after another, as varied in scenery as in language, and alike only in one thing, that they allowed unlimited gambling within their precincts.

For my father was a gambler, and in this lay the whole secret of my mother's broken heart, of my strange childhood, of our odd kaleidoscopic existence.

And then, when I was twelve, came a few brief years of happiness for me!

My father, being, I suppose, a little extra flush of money, and perhaps finding it a bother to take a child with him everywhere, sent me to school. For the first time in my life I enjoyed the society of other children; for the first time since my mother died I revelled in being cared for, watched over, and helped in tender, motherly fashion, and I was happy, oh! so happy, until the day came when my father arrived unexpectedly at the school, and——

It all happened so suddenly.

I was singing upstairs in the great schoolroom, when Miss Belmont, our headmistress, hurried in.

"Come downstairs at once, Di," she said breathlessly, "your father is here."

"My father?" I do not know why my heart sank at her words, excepting that the thought of my father brought with it a remembrance of those weary days of my childhood, and of my mother's lovely, heartbroken face.

Very slowly and reluctantly I went down to the drawing-room, where my father awaited me, and though I tried to feel glad, as a dutiful daughter should, I could not help shrinking a little when he kissed me.

Then he put me away from him, and a smile crossed his handsome, dissipated face.

"By Jove!" he muttered, "I never expected *this!* She'll do, she'll do, down to the ground."

I had no idea what he meant, though his words gave me again that odd sensation of fear and shrinking; but their meaning was to be made only too plain to me in the course of time.

My father talked to me for a few minutes in a rather scrappy, irrelevant fashion, looking very hard at me all the time, as though he were appraising my value, in the way a connoisseur appraises the value of a work of art.

Finally he said, with such suddenness that I nearly jumped out of my skin, "I have come to fetch you away, my dear. You must come home and keep house now for your poor old dad."

Did the dismay I felt show itself in my face?

I think it must have done, for he shrugged his shoulders, laughed a little acidly, and said—

"You don't seem overjoyed, but I can't help that. You will be a great help to me, and I want your help."

"My help? What can I do?" I asked, more puzzled than ever.

He laughed again; his laugh sent a cold feeling up and down my spine.

"Look in the glass, my dear," he answered with cynicism; "being a woman, you will perhaps find out there how you may be useful in entertaining your father's friends."

I was very young and very innocent in those days, and when I went to my bedroom to pack my box, I looked in the glass as my father had told me to do.

A slip of a girl looked back at me from the mirrored surface, a girl with wide, startled eyes, brown as a fawn's; with hair the colour of a ripe chestnut, falling in soft curling masses about a white forehead, and with a face on which the colour went and came in tints like the dainty flush upon a sea shell.

"I do believe I am pretty," I said aloud in an awestruck voice, and the laughing voice of one of my school-fellows exclaimed over my shoulder—

"Oh, Diana Meredith, you dreadful humbug! Don't you really know you are perfectly lovely?"

But I really had not known it until that day—truly and really I had not, and it gave me a sort of shock, half of surprise, half of fear. Well, I went home.

I found that home, at that moment, meant a fair-sized house, well, even luxuriously furnished, a staff of good servants, and all the surroundings of a gentleman of means and position. Who, indeed, would ever have guessed, on casually meeting my father, that the suave, courteous Mr. Meredith, who seemed merely a moneyed man of leisure, was really an adventurer, a gambler, a man living by his wits?

Even I did not take in the position at once. I fancied that my father had turned over a new leaf since my childhood days, that he no longer gambled, that he had made enough to pass the remainder of his days in affluence. Then the truth dawned upon me, and I felt more utterly lonely than I had ever felt in my life.

I gradually observed that no ladies ever came to the house; that our only guests were gentlemen, and those not of a kind with whom I cared to associate.

I knew absolutely no women; when I asked my father to take me to see his friends, to let me have some girl companions, he merely laughed, and said he had dropped all his lady acquaintances long ago, and that my business was to make myself pleasant to the people he brought in with him, and to make his house charming to them.

"Your face is my fortune as well as yours," he told me, with that dry cynicism which I had grown to dread.

He was kind to me in his own way, but I think now

Digitized by Google

that it was chiefly because of what he wanted me to do for him.

He lavished lovely gowns upon me, bought me jewellery, insisted upon my making the drawing-room a perfect palace of delight, and yet—I was lonely and uneasy. I felt that something besides fatherly affection underlay all this demonstration. I disliked intensely the men who were brought in to dinner by my father evening after evening, and who seemed so glad to linger in the drawing-room and talk to me, instead of beginning their card play at once in the little room downstairs, and I had an intuitive feeling that I was being drawn into a net from which I could not escape.

One man I feared and disliked above all the others, and he, as ill luck would have it, was my father's chief friend. Michael Standish was his name, and in appearance he was a dark, saturnine man of perhaps forty years old. Handsome enough in a repellant fashion, his face nevertheless produced on me a most unpleasant impression; yet he was invariably polite—and more than polite to me.

Every evening saw him by my side; often in the daytime he would appear as well, and he and my father would take me out, either into the Park or to some entertainment. But the more I saw of Michael Standish the more I feared him.

The admiration in his dark eyes sickened me; the way in which he seemed to take possession of me when others were present, as though I were his special property, gave me a feeling of revolt and horror.

Night after night the same round of events took place. The excellent dinner, at which I was the only woman present; the adjournment to the drawing-room, when I had to listen to compliments I detested, or talk to men whom I loathed, and then the departure of my father and his guests to the card-room, where they spent the remainder of the night, and from which I heard my father come up to bed in the dawn of morning.

The monotony of my life, its loneliness, its hatefulness, were beginning to tell on me, when a gleam of light shone through the clouds.

One evening there came amongst the other guests a man I had never seen before—a man as different from the rest as an archangel differs from a fiend! Shall I ever forget how the blood rushed to my heart, and left my face white, when I saw Denis Strahan enter the drawing-room, when I saw the surprise that flashed over his face at sight of me, and the little look of admiration that crept into his grey eyes when they met mine.

He was tall and very fair—fair as a girl, but there was no girlishness in his face, only strength and purity; and I wondered, oh! how I wondered, what had brought him to the den of thieves I knew by this time my father's house to be.

Long, long afterwards I discovered that he had first been drawn to my father by certain similarities of artistic taste, and that, being also a keen whist player, he had been misled into supposing that innocent whist playing was the *raison d'être* of the gathering to which he had been invited.

But though I wondered that first night why he came, I rejoiced at his coming, for he seemed to bring a sane and healthy atmosphere with him. I felt a sudden safety in the very fact of his presence.

He stayed only a short time in the card-room; just as I was crossing the landing to go up to bed I heard a step on the stairs, and turned to find him beside me. His eyes were shining and angry, his face was very white.

"Why do you stay here?" he said eagerly, all conventionalities forgotten. "It is not fit that—or are you one of them?" he added abruptly.

"I hate it," I cried vehemently. "I hate it all, but I am my father's daughter. I must stay with him if he tells me!"

A great pity replaced the suspicion in his eyes.

"Poor little girl," he whispered, and I felt a lump in my throat. "I am sorry. I have come to say good-bye. I shall never——"

I put out my hand and touched his sleeve.

"Oh! don't say it, don't say it," I exclaimed, "don't say you will not come again. You make me feel safe." A curious look swept over his face, half of doubt, half of pleasure, but as he looked at me the doubt died away, and he took my hand, saying:

"I believe you are as pure and good as you look. I will come again."

And then I knew that Denis Strahan had, for a moment, thought that I was willingly aiding and abetting my father as a decoy duck, but that the momentary doubt of me had given way to belief in my innocence.

And oh! indeed he was right. I was a very innocent girl, and only longed to make those words of my dear, dead mother, the guiding motto of my life:

"Be a pure and noble woman, and never stoop to do anything your conscience tells you is wrong, even if the wrong seems expedient."

Soon, terribly soon, I was to understand the full force of her words! One morning my father entered the drawing-room, his face blanched and lined, his hands trembling.

"I'm done for, Di," he said, "it's all up with me."

"What do you mean, father?" I answered, going quickly to his side, and seizing his shaking hand.

"That fiend Standish has me in his power, utterly in his power," he said, pacing the room feverishly. "I owe him more than I care to remember, and he won't give me time to recover the losses and pay him. He vows he will have payment to-morrow or ruin me utterly."

"How?" I whispered.

"*How?* The man is clever," my father laughed bitterly. "He will not only make me bankrupt and ruin me financially, he threatens to expose me all round, and show up this house for—for what it is," he eyed me uneasily.

"A gambling den," I answered quietly. "Oh, father, give it all up, dear; give it all up, and let us go away together and live quietly and happily. Let him do his worst, and——"

"Thank you, no, my dear," my father's usual coolness was returning, "his worst might be very bad indeed; one or two queerish things have happened here, things I should prefer not having dragged under the eyes of the law; things that would land me in one of His Majesty's convict establishments."

His coolness staggered me. I shuddered.

"Yes, Di, I am only speaking the truth," he went on, his face growing suddenly haggard. "God knows I've been a poor sort of father to you, but I don't suppose you want to see your poor old dad in prison, and only you can save me."

"*I?* Oh, father, what can I do? Tell me quickly; let me do what I can."

He came close to me, and put his hands on my shoulders, looking earnestly into my face. "Michael Standish will forego the debt, will keep silence about this house, will give me back every I.O.U. of mine he holds, if you will marry him?"

The words fell on my heart like molten lead.

"*Father!*" I cried, "it is impossible—*impossible!*"

My father's grasp on my shoulder tightened. "Di, for my sake," he said, and there was more tenderness in his voice than I had ever heard there, and it shook in a way that went to my heart.

After all, he was my father, and I could not bear to see him in trouble, it hurt me to look at his worn and haggard face.

"Standish loves you, Di," my father went on, still in that pitifully shaking voice, "he loves you, he is a very rich man, he will do his best to make you happy, he——"

"I can't do it," I exclaimed. "I can't do it," and, beside Standish's dark, evil face, another rose in my mind, a fair face, and pure and strong as that of an angel. "Can nothing else be done, father? Will he not give you time to get the money to pay him?"

DON'T MISS THE COMPETITIONS ON PAGES 647 & 659.

Digitized by Google

"He will agree to *nothing*. He will have no compromise. I begged him for a week's respite, he will not hear of it. In a week I could borrow the money—in a week much might happen. He will expose everything if I do not pay him to-morrow, unless you will marry him. That is his final word."

I wrenched myself from my father's hand, and went to look out of the window, to where the sunset light played over the trees in the square, and a yellow sky lay behind the dark house opposite.

Marry Michael Standish? Marry the man I loathed and feared and despised, to save my father? Impossible—impossible! Sell myself to such a man even for a reason that might appear a good one? No, I could not do it, and yet—ought I to think of myself at all, when my father was in such dire distress? Was it perhaps sometimes right to do evil that good might come? Was——

My mother's words flashed into my mind. "Never stoop to do anything your conscience tells you is wrong," and I turned back to my father.

"I cannot marry Mr. Standish," I said firmly, "it would be a deadly wrong to him and to myself. I cannot marry him."

"Then I am ruined, utterly and for ever.," my father replied; "ruined, and by my own daughter!"

* * * * *

The evening had come at last!

Ever since my final words to my father I had been in a fearful state of mind, wondering whether I had been right or wrong in my decision, half inclined to recall my words, yet sick with dismay at the bare thought of doing so; torn with a thousand doubts as I saw my father's haggard face, yet filled with unspeakable loathing at the very idea of marrying Michael Standish.

And now the evening had come, and Mr. Standish would have to be told my decision.

He and Denis Strahan dined with us, and the conversation was general, but during the whole meal I never lost the consciousness of those dark burning eyes upon me, never for a moment got rid of a nightmare of dread that hung over me.

I knew that Denis Strahan's eyes were often upon me too; I read the sympathy in his face, even though he did not know what was troubling me.

No word of love had ever passed between us, but I was sure that he loved me—because, oh! why is a woman sure of such a thing as this?

Not for one moment were he and I alone that evening; in some subtle way my father kept us apart, and presently the three men went to the card-room, leaving me alone upstairs. I could settle to nothing! My ears were strained to catch any sounds from below, and though I could not have told anyone what I expected to hear, I was not surprised when footsteps sounded on the stairs, and my father's voice became audible through the half-open door.

"She will not consent," he said, in low tones.

"I think she will." These words were in Mr. Standish's voice.

"You will never work it." My father's voice spoke again, but it was so low I could that not hear how his sentence ended.

Mr. Standish took up his parable. "Trust me, Meredith," he said, "you shall be free, and I will get what I want."

The grim significance to me of the last words made me cold with fear, and at that instant the two men entered the room, and I do not think either of them had the least idea that some of their conversation had been overheard.

My father looked nervous and shaken, but Standish looked triumphant, his eyes glowed.

"Miss Meredith," he said, "your father has told me of your decision; I need not worry you by telling you my feelings. I come to ask whether you can reconsider it."

I was on my feet facing him; his eyes, blazing with passionate admiration, looked full into mine.

"No," I said firmly. "I cannot alter my mind."

"You will not marry me, though I love you, God knows how dearly."

"I cannot marry you," I replied, "it would be a sin."

A curious smile crossed his saturnine face.

"A *sin*—to save your father?" My father glanced at me with a look I could not interpret. Was it desperation? Was it—could it be—amusement? I dismissed the thought, and turned to reply to Mr. Standish, when he continued:

"Miss Meredith, I have offered you and your father a—what I may call, a last chance. Mr. Strahan has heard of your father's predicament; he offers to pay the debt to me" (I started forward with flushed face, and clasped hands), "and I—refuse—excepting on one condition."

"Refuse?" How my heart sank.

"Yes, I refuse—excepting on one condition."

"And the condition?"

"I am a born gambler, Miss Meredith," he answered, his eyes gleaming strangely; "and I do not only want your father's money; I want you"—his voice dropped to a passionate whisper. "Now, I have a suggestion to make which will leave everything to the Goddess of Chance!"

I looked at him blankly.

"This is my proposal," he said. "Strahan and I will have a pack of cards dealt out to us, and whichever of us first turns up the Queen of Hearts shall win you!"

I started and nearly screamed, but he silenced me by a gesture, whilst he continued:

"If I turn up the Queen I free your father of all obligations to me and you agree to be my wife. If Strahan has the Queen you become his and he pays me the money your father owes me."

"I will never agree to anything so utterly humiliating," I cried, my cheeks flaming with anger; "how could you, how could Mr. Strahan dare to propose such a thing."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, Miss Meredith! Then—I give you fair warning—I leave the house now, this instant. I shall insist upon receiving every penny from your father, and I shall report the nightly transactions carried on here to the police without delay."

A feeling of despair swept over me, to be replaced suddenly by one of hope.

Was it because I was a gambler's daughter that something in the idea of appealing to Chance appealed to me? Was it that far down in my heart I felt certain that Denis Strahan would never have agreed to anything that could truly humiliate me?

I do not know; all I know is that I turned sharply to Mr. Standish, saying:

"Come, we will see," and, sweeping out of the drawing-room, I preceded the two men to the cardroom downstairs.

Denis Strahan sat by the table, his head buried in his hands. He lifted it when he heard the rustling of my gown, and I saw that his face was deathly. He pushed back his chair and came towards me.

"It was the only way," he whispered; "God grant it may turn out right—my darling—my darling."

How my heart leapt at the tenderness in his words, and in his eyes, though I tried not to show what I was feeling, as my father and his hateful friend came in.

"Miss Meredith agrees," Mr. Standish said to Denis, looking at him with an evil triumphant leer; "whoever first turns up the Queen of Hearts wins her, and sets her father free."

Mr. Strahan nodded—he could not speak, and he sat down heavily at the table without a word.

Then I spoke, and I have no notion, to this day, what prompted my utterance:

"I agree," I said, "but if either of the two who are playing this

THE ALBERT CATE MYSTERY is the Title of our Thrilling New Serial which Commences shortly.

Digitized by Google

game cheat by the fraction of an inch, the question is settled for ever! My father is to be freed from his debts, and I shall be free to marry whom I will. Do you agree to that, gentlemen?"

"Of course," Denis exclaimed quickly.

"By all means," Mr. Standish said smoothly; "cheating on either side disqualifies the one who cheats from further action. I quite agree."

"So be it," I said, my spirits suddenly and unaccountably rising; "then give me the cards and I will deal. If I am to be the stakes, I will deal! Give me the cards!"

I stood beside the table and the men sat, one on either side of me, their faces set and strained.

But I? I laughed as I caught sight of myself in the long glass opposite, and saw how beautiful I was; yes, I laughed, and then I looked through the pack to make sure that only one Queen of Hearts was there, and after that I dealt the cards, and Mr. Standish never took his evil gaze from my face, and Denis' clear eyes met mine each time I laid a card upon the pile before him.

"I conclude that I begin," Mr. Standish said when I had finished; "I sit on the dealer's left."

"Begin, for Heaven's sake," Denis answered roughly; "let us get it done."

And I saw that his face was working with emotion as he looked at the cards that lay face downwards on the table.

"Begin at once," I repeated, and I looked at Mr. Standish and the smile died from my face.

His hands fingered his cards, and my eyes turned from his face and watched his hands. All in the flash of a second, he whipped up a card and flung it on the table between himself and Denis, crying:

"The Queen of Hearts!" But I laid my hand over his, and over the card, and said, in a voice that shook with righteous anger:

"You have cheated! That card was never dealt by me!" In a second both men were on their feet, and Mr. Standish put out his hand to sweep all the cards together, but I prevented him, and he swore under his breath.

"Wait!" I said, some strange new strength seeming to have come to me. The two men and my father all watched me silently; and under their eyes, I set aside the Queen of Hearts Mr. Standish had thrown down, and then I looked through all the pack I had dealt to the two.

And the Queen of Hearts lay at the bottom—the very bottom of the cards that had been dealt to Denis!

"We agreed," I said very coldly, "that the one who cheated would no longer have part nor lot in the matter, and that in such a case as this my father should go free—and I should marry whom I chose. Is not that so?"

I looked into Mr. Standish's evil sullen face.

"There was no cheating," he said; "I turned up the card."

"And how comes it there are two Queens of Hearts now, when there was only one in the pack before I dealt?" I asked.

"Very strange!" Mr. Standish sneered, looking hard at Denis, who stood motionless and silent; "either you or Strahan——"

"Neither I nor Mr. Strahan did anything unfair," I said quietly, breaking into his sentence, "*and you know it.* I saw you draw the second Queen of Hearts from the sleeve of your coat. I saw you take it and fling it on the table. My father is free of his debt, and I am free to marry whom I will; but it will not be you, Mr. Standish."

With another angry oath he strode towards the door, but my father caught and held him.

"Before we part to-night," he said, "I will see my I.O.U's. burnt in here."

And, to make a long story short, the wretched Standish disgorged from his pockets the various odd slips of paper which my father had at different times given him, and they were burnt before his eyes.

Then he vanished from our sight, and, I am thankful to say, he has never crossed my path again.

I married Denis Strahan, and I am the happiest woman in the world.

L. G. Moberly.

YET ANOTHER TEN GRAMOPHONES TO BE GIVEN AWAY!

We are again offering this week ten of our now famous Gramophones for competition among *Short Stories* readers. All you have to do is to go in and win, and when the prize is delivered at your door, call in your friends and, having placed in position one of the two records with which every instrument is provided, explain to them that you gained the wonderful talking, singing, and playing instrument they are listening to by the fact of your being a reader of *Short Stories*, adding that they might go and do likewise.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

As you will see by page 647, Miss Madge Morris is to be married on December 2nd. I want you to construct a sentence the initial letters of the words of which must form that young lady's name, M. A. D. G. E. M. O. R. R. I. S., in correct order, and the sentence must be in the form of a message of thanks for the services she has rendered to *Short Stories* readers.

The ten competitors who send in sentences which in the Editor's opinion are the best, will each be rewarded with a handsome Gramophone.

Attempts must be made on the backs of postcards only, marked "Wedding," and addressed to the Competition Editor, *Short Stories*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Postcards must reach us not later than first post on Tuesday, November 25th.

Result of the "Short Stories" Leaflet Competition.

A GRAMOPHONE has been sent to each of the following competitors who disposed of the fifty leaflets sent to them in the most advantageous manner:

Miss I. Graham, 12 Houston Place, Glasgow, S.S.

F. Locke, 16 Drayton Road, Sipson, Yiewsley R.S.O., Middlesex.

Miss L. Stevenson, 12 Armadale Street, Glasgow.

H. Barnes, 2 Vauxhall Walk, S.E.

D. Moscardini, 17 Herbertson Street, Glasgow, S.S.

PENCIL-CASES have been sent to the fifty competitors whose names appear below:

Miss M. Hamilton, 45 Regent Street, Blackburn; R. Pescod, Springfield Terrace, Low Fell, Gateshead-on-Tyne; G. H. Bloomfield, 55 Norman Road, Greenwich, S.E.; Miss L. Mays, 100 Beresford Street, Moss Side, Manchester; H. Kitching, 22, Grove Street, Mansfield; M. Gwynn, 21 Harrow Road, Newport, Mon.; J. Platt, 66 Prussia Street, Manchester; Miss A. Wonnacott, 156, Cathays Terrace, Cardiff; J. Price, Lower Wallop, Stockbridge; T. Molony, Church Street, Rathdowney, Ballybrophy; R. Jones, 32 Newark Street, Walton, Liverpool; F. Hobbs, 12 Elizabeth Terrace, Eltham; T. Forbes, Ballanton, Aberfoyle; Master O. Deacon, 4 Robin Hood Street, Newport, I. of W.; Miss B. Livock, Marion Terrace, Hill Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh; W. Forsyth, 304 Morningside Road, Edinburgh; H. Bellerby, 2 Little Reed Street, Hull; N. Blomberg, 42 New Road, Commercial Road, E.; W. Romaine, 19 Richmond Hill, Brighton; J. Sheridan, 6 Austin Street, Northampton; E. Morley, Plumpton Green, near Lewes; L. Bruce, 4 Clarence Road, Handsworth, Birmingham; J. Rathbone, Leon Villas, Bight Pill, Stroud; Miss Wayschal, "Chesterfield," Warwick Road, Cliftonville, Margate; W. Ferry, 137 Olivia Street, Bootle, Liverpool; W. Shaw, 3 Bristo Port, Edinburgh; F. H. Taylor, 44 Francis Terrace, Carmarthen; E. Barrow, 4 Glebe Cottages, Whiteley's Estate, Hanworth; Miss H. Moir, 53 Dens Road, Dundee; M. Gilvary, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim; J. Henderson, 3 Leddington Road, The Portway, West Ham; Mrs Decrievell, 8 York Road, W. Hendon; P. J. Carroll, Barrack Street, Granard, Co. Longford; F. Murray, 102 North Hill, Highgate, N.; H. Chamberlain, Portland House, Southtown, Great Yarmouth; A. Berry, 6 Malins Road, Buckland, Portsmouth; H. M. Alexander, 17 Eglinton Street, Belfast; C. H. Knight, 158 Killearn Road, St. Germains Estate, Hither Green, Catford; Miss H. Harding, 14 Whitmore Street, Hockley, Birmingham; S. Fenton, 6 Tib Place, Cast Street, Varley Street, Oldham Road, Manchester; C. Swan, 40 Felden Street, Munster Road, Fulham; W. Howchin, 116 Military Road, Colchester; H. Endeacott, 11 Cheap Street, Hunslet Road, Leeds; Miss K. Hughes, 50 Cathcart Road, South Kensington; J. McDevitt, 57 Barrack Street, Strabane, Co. Tyrone; N. May, 4 Park Terrace, Stoke-on-Trent; W. J. Davies, Evan Terrace, Dukestown, near Tredegar; J. Binyon, 21 Chevet Street, Sidney Road, Homerton, N.E.; T. McEniry, Morlestown, Caher, Co. Tipperary, Ireland; C. Beasley, 148 Cross Lane, Radcliffe, near Manchester.

She Remembered Him.

HUSBAND (off on a long journey): "Do you often think of me when I am gone?" Wife: "Indeed I do. It takes me a week to get the smell of smoke out of the house."

Pity to Waste the Light.

JACK: "You are the light of my life, May—and, taking that into consideration, I think I may turn down the gas."

Mamma's Opinion.

YOUNG HOBBS: "Mamma, what animal is the king of beasts?" Mrs. Hobbs (with a significant look at her husband): "Man!"

Obeying Orders.

MOTHER: "Clara, I can't tell you how shocked I was to see you kiss that scamp, Jack Manlay." Daughter: "Why, mamma, you told me to set my face against him."

What the Audience Thought.

CONTRALTO: "Only think of it! I was encored three times in my last song." Soprano (spitefully): "Yes, the audience recognised that you needed practice."

Quite a Different Bird.

MRS. FLASH: "Isn't it a duck of a bonnet?" Mr. Flash: "It's more like a pelican of a bonnet." Mrs. Flash: "What do you mean, dear?" Mr. Flash: "The bill is too long for a duck."

Why He Played.

SHE: "I shouldn't think such a Society man as you would care about football." He: "I have to keep in training as a matter of necessity. When I go to receptions it helps me to get down to supper first."

He Had Reason to Know.

YOUNG WIFE: "Yes, father always gives away expensive things when he makes presents." Husband: "So I discovered when he gave you away." (And then he went to the library to draw a cheque for the monthly millinery bill.)

Very Close.

MAUDIE: "Why should you think I'm engaged to him? If you had seen us together you would at once have seen there was nothing between us." Frank: "I did see you together, and, not seeing anything between you, at once concluded that you were engaged."

She Didn't Mind.

JACK: "My darling, I want to tell you something. I have deceived you. I am not rich, but utterly penniless. Will it make any difference to you, dear?" Ethel: "Not the slightest, Jack." Jack: "I am glad of that, dearest. Are you quite sure it will make no difference to you?" Ethel: "Quite sure. I can marry old Moneybags."

An Important Question.

"I WANTED to ask you something," he said, with a look of much anxiety on his face. "Yes," she replied, as a sudden smile illuminated her countenance. "I know what I am going to say may sound a little silly——" "I don't think it will, George." "Well, your father——" "He likes you very much, George." "Does he? Well, when he came home to-day, did he happen to say what was the winner? I came down in such a hurry that I didn't have time to look at the paper."

John Had His Doubts.

"I KNOW I'm a little irritable, John, but if I had to live my life over again, I'd marry you just the same." John: "H'm, I have my doubts about it!"

Girls, Beware!

"BE MINE!" he cried, in a voice surcharged with anguish. "If you refuse me I shall die!" That was forty years ago, and the heartless girl refused him. Yesterday he died. Girls, beware!

A Fatal Mistake.

"I HEAR that Jenks' rich lady-love has broken off their engagement." "Is that so? Why was it?" "You know he was always a bad speller, well, he headed a letter to her like this: 'My bony angle.'"

Testing his Imagination.

YOUNG HUSBAND: "I'm just about dead beat putting down this carpet." Wife: "The carpet is not heavy." "No; but I have to work in such a cramped position." "Nonsense. Just imagine you are on your bicycle."

Still Some Doubt.

MOTHER: "He is a very desirable match, Mary, and I think he loves you." Daughter: "I'm not so sure of that." Mother: "Why not?" Daughter: "He leaves me in less than an hour after bidding me good-night."

Sergeant Knew Her.

A PRIVATE soldier, walking arm-in-arm with his sweetheart, met his sergeant when about to enter a restaurant. He respectfully introduced her to him: "Sergeant, my sister!" "Yes, yes," was the reply, "I knew her long ago; she was mine once."

Brave and Brainy.

SWEET GIRL: "The man I marry must be both brave and brainy." Adoring Youth: "When we were out sailing, and upset, I saved you from a watery grave." "That was brave, I admit, but it was not brainy." "Yes, it was; I upset the boat on purpose."

Sleight of Hand.

FITZ-JONES: "Did you go to the pantomime last evening, Percy?" De Brown: "No; I attended a sleight-of-hand performance." Fitz-Jones: "Where?" De Brown: "I went to call on Miss Le Smythe, and offered her my hand, but she slighted it."

No Cause for Worry.

ELDERLY FIANCÉ: "I hope you are not impressed by the silly sentimentalists who hold that because you've married once you ought not to marry again?" Pretty Widow: "Don't let that worry you, dear; I've no such prejudice. My own dear mother was married three times, and I only hope that in all things I may follow her example." And she wondered why he looked sad.

Brutal Candour.

JONES is frankness itself. Being at an evening party, he took occasion to compliment a lady, not otherwise remarkable for her beauty, on her small feet. "You can't mean what you say, Mr. Jones," said the lady, greatly flattered, as she still further, by a deft movement of the hand, exposed the members in question. "You are quite right, madam," said Jones, looking down; "I only saw half of them."

She Had Considered.

"I HOPE, Jennie, that you have given the matter serious consideration," said a lady to a servant who had "given notice," because she was to be married that "day two weeks." "Oh, I have, ma'am," was the earnest reply. "I've been to two fortune tellers, and a clairvoyant, and looked in a sign book and dreamt on a lock of his hair, and been to one of those asterrologers, and to a meejum, and to a palmist, and they all tell me to go ahead, ma'am. I ain't one to marry reckless-like, ma'am."

Digitized by Google

The Wooing of a Pedlar.

A Strange Story of Circumstantial Evidence and a Woman's Love.

"Wants a job, does you?"

"Yes, if you have one to give me."

"Well, I *am* in want of a man, but I don't think as you'll know much about the work."

"I could soon learn."

"That's all very well; but when it comes to teachin' folk their business, an' payin' on 'em at the same time for doin' of it, it seems a bit rough on such as me, don't it?"

The seeker for employment was a tall, well set-up young fellow of twenty-six or so. Somehow he did not appear to be one of the sort who would be used to such work as he was applying for; there being a superior air about him, which he succeeded badly in disguising, while his clothes, shabby and travel-stained, were, it was obvious, of originally good cut and material. In addition he wore an evident wig, black and ill-fitting, his complexion, too, being unmistakably stained a darkish brown.

All this had not escaped the old cheap-jack's eye, and in his own mind he came to a conclusion, which after events proved to be tolerably correct.

He was a strangely eccentric creature, old Peter Hennig, and made still more so by the very nature of his occupation. Yet he was a just and kindly man, one indeed who, though he was keen upon the profits of his business, never, by any chance, took a mean advantage of any human being.

"Look a here, mister," he said at length, coming down from his perch on the top of the van steps. "I don't want to pry into no man's affairs, if I thinks as that man is straight and honest. So I ain't a-goin' to ax you no questions, but I likes the looks of you, an' if you cares to help me get rid o' the goods when I pitches, pickin' up from me what you can at odd times, why, there's my hand on it, an' ten bob a week an' your board an' lodgin'—in the van."

"That will suit me," was the reply. "And I'll do my best to suit *you*."

"What's your name?"

"My name? Oh—er—Smith—Tom Smith."

"Well, then, Tom Smith, you an' me's pals now, till one or both of us thinks different. Arter supper to-night, we're a-goin' to put the horses to, an' get along the road for Sevenoaks, where I'm due to-morrow."

"I just want to go back to the inn in the village and fetch a few traps I left there, and then I'm with you," said Tom Smith.

"Right you are, an' by the time you come back I'll have something ready to eat an' drink."

"You see, it is like this," said the new hand on his return, in answer to a hint of old Peter's. "I have not done anything wrong, but, all the same, I do not wish to run the risk of recognition in those places through which we shall be likely to pass; and as I am well known throughout the sout anyway, I have altered my personal appearance a bit."

"Which you have, an' no mistake, though I've never set eyes on you before in my natural," was the other's only comment upon the explanation.

The new man was a bit green at first, as was only natural, but it was wonderful how soon he picked up "cheap-jack" ways.

He had a fund of humour, too, far ahead of the master of the concern, so that before long old Peter began to take longer and longer spells of "time off," leaving the selling to his new partner.

Things went very well therefore, till one day Hennig announced his intention of going into Surrey, to the neighbourhood of Guildford, the county town.

Business had been very slack in the Kentish villages, and small towns, while Surrey was always to be relied on for brisk trade at that time of the year.

Hennig could not but notice that Tom Smith visibly started when Surrey was named.

"Near Guildford, did you say?"

"Yes, I've a big market round about there."

"You won't touch Leafield, I suppose, will you?"

"I generally puts up about two mile from there," replied old Peter, trying to get to the bottom of the other's evident disinclination to fall in with the proposed new route arrangement.

"Look here, mate," he said presently, "I don't want to force you to go into Surrey agen your will; so just say the word, an' we'll keep our present pitch till it's time to sample the Norfolk dumplin's."

"I shouldn't think of it," said Smith. "I'll only ask you not to talk about me anywhere near Leafield, and—but there, I'll tell you more later on."

"Right you are!" replied the old man. "I believe in a still tongue makin' for a wise head, and when I says 'mum' I means 'mum'; so don't you fear nothin', mate."

A week later Leafield was reached, and the van was pitched in a field belonging to a farmer, who had known old Hennig for years.

Tom Smith had stuck so close to business up to this, that it was the more noticeable now when he began regularly to absent himself of an evening. One night in particular this happened, and as there was not much business doing, Peter shut up the show, and took a stroll himself.

It was not a spying expedition that he was on by any means; but certain it was, that walking along the main road for about a mile, he came face to face with his partner—and a young lady.

Old Peter knew her, for he had seen her many a time in former visits to the neighbourhood—it was Miss Compton, of Plessis Park. The pair seemed on very good terms with each other, a fact which fairly flustered Hennig, who had suspected nothing approaching to anything of this sort.

"Ethel!" said Tom Smith, whom Peter saw was now for the first time minus his wig and complexion, "this is a dear old friend of mine—my master, in fact. Hennig, let me make you known to Miss Compton, who, when I set up by and by in business for myself, is going into partnership with me."

Ethel Compton was one of those women who always do the right thing and speak the right word at the right moment. So now she held out her pretty little hand and smilingly said. "I've heard all sorts of nice things about you, Mr. Hennig, and I am very pleased to know you."

"As I am to know you, miss," replied the old cheap-jack, with a low bow.

"Mr. Dorrington says you——"

"Not Dorrington now or yet, Ethel, just plain Tom Smith, please."

She laughed, said "Good-night" to Peter, and turned off with her companion towards Plessis Park.

Before they went to bed that night, Tom Smith told Hennig his story; or, at any rate, as much of it as made clear his position.

His real name, he said, was Dorrington. Basil Dorrington, and until just before he had joined Peter Hennig's travelling establishment, he had acted as private secretary to Mr. Compton, Ethel's father, at Plessis Park and Grosvenor Square.

Digitized by Google

It was not unnatural that, seeing much of the only daughter of the house, he should fall in love with her, and that she should reciprocate in kind. Unfortunately, there was another gentleman in the field, a cousin, whose suit was exclusively encouraged by Mr. Compton.

This cousin, one Bernard Peyton, would inherit property, that marched with the Plessis Park estate, a fact which, in Mr. Compton's eyes, made the match more than desirable.

True, the Peyton property was, through the anticipative extravagance of the heir in the matter of horse-racing and gambling, heavily encumbered, a fact, however, which, in the father's opinion, was no bar to the proposed union.

It can be easily imagined, therefore, that Basil Dorrington's chances of winning Ethel were very remote. Still, as the latter had a strong will, and the gift of exercising it, there was just a bare possibility that everything might have ended well and happily but for an altogether unexpected sensational development.

A cheque for a large amount, and purporting to be drawn and signed by Mr. Compton, was presented at the Leafield branch of the Capital and Counties Bank, and pronounced to be a forgery. Basil Dorrington was at once accused of the crime, the circumstantial evidence being so overwhelmingly strong against him, that if, to save a scandal, the matter had not been hushed up, he would undoubtedly have had to suffer a long term of imprisonment. Of course he had to give up his post, and to seek some other means of getting a living, as unlike his former occupation as possible.

"Do you think me guilty?" he asked Peter Hennig.

"No, I don't, lad! And I take it anything but kindly of you that you should ask me such a question."

"Well, I thought you would believe in me, for I tell you, Hennig, on my honour as a gentleman, that I did not forge that cheque, and more, that I have my own suspicions as to who did."

"Mr. Bernard Peyton?"

"The same."

"An' what be you a-goin' to do with him?"

"I don't know yet. I'll tell you perhaps to-morrow. Good-night!"

* * * * *

"Here's a letter for you," said old Peter to his partner the next morning. "'Name o' Smith?'" postman says. 'Yes,' says I. 'Letter for him,' he says. 'Right you are,' says I, 'I'll give it him.' Hullo, mate, what's up? Bad news?"

"Not exactly. Miss Compton tells me that Bernard Peyton has an idea that I am in the neighbourhood, and knows of our meeting place; she suggests, therefore, that the spot should be changed this evening."

"You're a fortunate man, Mr. Dor—; beg pardin'—Tom Smith. If I'd a had a gal like yours—no offence meant—I'd be a happier man to-day."

In the evening, about nine o'clock, Tom Smith went off as usual. He was never, as a rule, very late returning; but this night it was past eleven and no sign of him.

Old Peter sat smoking his short black clay, on the top of the van steps, for he was too uneasy to turn in until the other came back.

"Good evenin', boss!"

Hennig had not heard the soft footsteps upon the grass, the sudden salutation startling him so that his pipe dropped out of his mouth.

When he saw that it was a stranger, with a fairly-large pack upon his shoulder, he took him for a wandering member of his own tribe.

"Evenin'," replied Peter, when he had recovered himself. "Come fur?"

"A matter of ten mile or so—from Redhill."

He was a low-browed, round-shouldered individual, and Peter did not like the look of him.

"Um! Going fur?"

"I'm lookin' for a lodgin' in the village. But this pack o' mine's so precious heavy that I don't feel I can carry it another inch."

"Put it down a bit, an' give yourself a rest," said Peter.

"You look a good sort!" quickly responded the other; "will you take care of my bag for the night, so as I can get on quicker to the village, and I'll call for it in the morning?"

However much old Peter might dislike anyone, he would never refuse to do them a kindness.

"Right you are!" he said, "sling it up here, and I'll put it inside till you comes for it to-morrow mornin'."

He thought it a bit strange afterwards that the fellow never even so much as thanked him, making off in the direction of Leafield village as soon as he had got rid of his burden.

"Tired, I suppose," he said to himself. "Well, mebbe I should be the same."

Then Tom Smith came hurriedly up, looking annoyed and out of spirits, and Peter forgot all about the man and his bag.

"What's wrong, mate?" he asked.

"You're almost as wise as I am," returned the other moodily. "That letter—I don't know what to make of it. Ethel wasn't at the newly-appointed place, where I waited more than a hour, or at the old spot, where I subsequently went—though I'm not surprised at that, it being so late."

"Here!" said Peter, "are you sure as it's her writin'?"

"Oh, there's no doubt about that; the only thing I can think of is that either she is not well, or that she could not elude Peyton, who, as you know, lives in the house."

* * * * * * *

"Is your name Peter Hennig?"

"Yes, it is; and I ain't ashamed of it."

"Well, I am a sergeant of police, and you are my prisoner."

"Prisoner! What for?"

"Burglary."

"Burglary! An' whose house as I bin a-burglin', pray?"

"Mr. Compton's, of Plessis Park."

Tom Smith, who was at breakfast with old Peter, started up, and demanded an explanation of the sergeant, vehemently protesting that the whole thing was a mistake and a blunder.

The officer, who was accompanied by two other constables, took no notice of the young man's protest.

"Your name, I take it," he said, "is Basil Keith Dorrington, alias Thomas Smith; and you are also charged as an accomplice of this man."

The sergeant, with one of the constables, then proceeded to thoroughly search the van.

"What's this?" said the former presently, as he dragged from under Peter's "bunk" the bag, left the night before by the stranger from Redhill.

"That!" replied the old cheap-jack, "that's somethin' I'm a-takin' care on for a friend o' mine."

"Oh, is it?" answered the officer. "Well, if you and your friend have no objection, I'll open it, and see what's in it."

Without any ceremony they forced the bag, and turned out upon the floor of the van a heap of plate and valuable jewellery of all kinds.

"Hennig!" said Tom Smith, half angry, half mystified, "what does this mean?"

"Mate," replied Peter, "I'm as much in the dark as you are."

Then while the police were bundling the stolen property up into the bag again, he related to his partner how it was the goods came there.

"Of course I believe you," said Smith; "but it is clear that the plot to ruin me has taken a fresh turn, and how to circumvent the scoundrel who is at the bottom of it all I am at my wits' end to think."

"Well, I've got an idea," whispered the old man, "that there letter 'll not only be the means o' clearin' *this* up, but 'll also put that other matter we know of straight an' true."

* * * * *

The result of the preliminary examination before a magistrate of Peter Hennig and his partner was a foregone conclusion; inasmuch as

WOULD YOU LIKE A PIECE OF MADGE MORRIS' WEDDING CAKE? THEN TURN TO PAGE 647.

Digitized by Google

a set of skeleton keys were found in the grass under the van; while a knife, known to be Peter's, and with his name scratched upon it, was picked up outside the window of the butler's pantry at Plessis Park.

The accused were, therefore, committed to the next Guildford Assizes; the bail, however, of the solicitor, employed by Ethel to defend them, being accepted for their appearance.

During the interval between the examination and the trial Basil Dorrington, to call him now by his proper name, did not once see Ethel Compton. He heard from her frequently through the solicitor for the defence.

The day before the trial he received a letter from her, which would have told him, even if he had not known it only too well before, that her love and trust were his more than ever.

"My dear," she wrote, "I cannot, for many reasons, exactly explain how, but all will come right. Do more than hope—be sure."

With unblushing effrontery Bernard Peyton sat in court at the solicitor's table to see and to enjoy his rival's degradation.

There were, however, two unpleasant surprises in store for him that day.

The first was when, at the bidding of the counsel for the defence, the usher of the court called "Ethel Compton" as a witness.

Without a trace of nervousness or false modesty, she admitted having written to Basil Dorrington, appointing a meeting at *the usual place* on the night of the robbery. This letter she gave to her maid to post. Mr. Dorrington did not keep the appointment.

Then the maid was called.

She said that on her way through the hall to post the letter Mr. Compton called her into the library. Throwing the letter on to the hall table, she found, on returning in less than five minutes, that it was gone.

She heard Mr. Peyton speaking to the butler, and pass out while she was engaged with Mr. Compton in the library. The time was eleven in the morning.

More than one person in Court now noticed that Bernard Peyton's face was white to ghastliness.

"Call Richard Drake!"

The witness, a low-browed individual, with a stoop, had evidence to give, which was certainly, though brief, to the point. He declared that he had been employed by Bernard Peyton to "crack the crib," and so dispose of the "swag" that the cheap-jack and his partner should have the credit of it. The knife he had picked up when Peter Hennig dropped it, during the heat of auction time, three evenings before, and had placed it where the police had afterwards found it. The set of "skeletons" were his, and he supposed he must have mislaid them on his night visit to Peter. They were not a "plant." Peyton was to have given him a hundred pounds for the job, but all he got was a "fiver" on account."

A couple of policemen had by this time placed themselves one on each side of the wretched schemer Bernard Peyton, who was in a state of complete collapse.

In the case of the two men at the bar, a formal verdict of acquittal was immediately entered.

Richard Drake, though arrested with his employer, was ultimately allowed to turn King's evidence.

Bernard Peyton, before his conviction and sentence to a long term of penal servitude, confessed that he had not only written the misleading letter, in imitation of Ethel Compton's handwriting, but had also forged the cheque which had been the beginning of all the trouble.

He hated Basil Dorrington, and was determined to stick at nothing to ruin him, and to lose him his sweetheart.

* * * * * * *

"And you did it all for my sake! What can I give you in return?" said Basil, still in Tom Smith's garments.

"Nothing," she answered him, "for I know I had your love long ago; and you have nothing better than that to give me."

* * * * * * *

Old Peter Hennig was an honoured guest at his late partner's wedding, which took place in the spring of the following year.

E. Ralph.

SOME THINGS TO . . . . REMEMBER.

REMEMBER

Pearson's

Xmas 'Xtra.

REMEMBER NOT TO FORGET

TO BUY IT.

REMEMBER TO REMIND

YOUR FRIENDS TO BUY IT.

ALSO REMEMBER.

That PEARSON'S XMAS 'XTRA costs One Shilling only.

That it is now on sale.

That it contains sixty-four pages, thirty-two printed in colours.

That its stories are bright and interesting.

That its pictures are as charming as numerous.

That its jokes are original.

If you remember these facts you will . . . not forget to buy it

To-day.

Digitized by Google

A FOE IN THE FAMILY

By NOWELL CAY.

(uthor of "The Presumption of Stanley Hay, M.P."

A Plot to be Frustrated.

GEORGE ILDEN, Baron, of Ilden Castle, while staying with his uncle Jasper, at Pennybrook Hall, suddenly discovers that several suspicious events which have taken place during his stay at the Hall, point to the existence of a plot against his life. He has been shot at, poison has been placed in his pocket-flask, and other attempts, fortunately futile, have been made on his life. He confides in Cathie Hay, his cousin, and they agree that as many members of his own family would materially benefit by his death, the attempts must have their origin in that direction. They suspect Percival, Ilden's cousin. Ilden asks Cathie to marry him, as a means of circumventing his enemies' designs, but she has to refuse.

At about this time he meets Florence Courthorpe, the sister of an old college chum who was drowned while boating. She is very poor, and has taken a situation as governess at Witterby, a village not far from Pennybrook. In seeking to escape his foe, Ilden inadvertently settles down just opposite Florence's temporary home.

Late one night Florence sees a man attempt to enter Ilden's bedroom window with evident criminal designs. She leaves the house clad only in dressing-gown and warns Ilden of his danger. For this exploit her employer dismisses her.

She now has no home, so next day leaves Witterby to stay with some friends at Lallerton. Ilden accompanies her. Arrived at Lallerton, however, they discover that Florence's friends, the Despards, have left suddenly, and no trace of them can be found. Florence, of course, is greatly distressed.

Ilden, however, feeling that he is responsible for her position, and desiring to baulk his enemy, proposes to her, is accepted, and marries her secretly. An announcement in the papers informs his family of the wedding.

Shortly after their marriage Ilden receives a message urging him to return to Pennybrook, his uncle Rupert being dangerously ill. Leaving his wife at the apartments he has taken in London, Ilden leaves for Pennybrook. He is met at the Hall by Cathie, who informs him that his uncle is dead, and that he is again exposing his life to danger.

Cathie informs him of her belief that Guy Despard is in the plot, and insinuates that his own wife, being a friend of the Despards, is possibly implicated.

That night her fears for his safety are shown to be well founded. For in the middle of the night the alarm bell is violently rung, and as Ilden opens his door to ascertain the cause, an attempt is made to stab him. Ilden immediately gives chase to his would-be murderer, and, catching him, throws him down, and is half-strangling him when Grant appears with a light, the rays of which show Ilden's captive to be none other than his cousin Percival. Percival, however, declares that he saw Despard entering Ilden's room and thought he was stabbing at him. A search is made and Despard is discovered. He is locked in a cellar till he can be handed to the police in the morning, but someone lets him out during the night. Next day Ilden leaves the Hall to make inquiries regarding Despard at Lallerton, and finds that Despard has been there before him and knows of Lady Ilden's assumed name of Mrs. George and her hiding place at Sydenham.

(The above is a short synopsis of the opening chapters.)

Mystery Upon Mystery.

"How do you know my name?" he asked, his voice betraying none of the excitement which its mention had given him.

"Mr. Despard told me. I mentioned that you had come here expecting to find his sister at the cottage still, and I said how disappointed the lady had been at finding her friend gone. He knew at once who you were, and of course that is how I was able to write, sir. Before, I did not even know your name."

"You wrote to *me*?" he said, feeling not a little bewildered.

"Yes, sir, or rather to your lady, to return the little gold brooch she dropped here. We found it almost as soon as you were gone, and put it by in hopes that we should hear from you. I sent it off registered just a little while before you came, sir. If I had only known, I might have saved myself the trouble."

He remembered that Florence had spoken of the loss of the trinket on their journey to London, but she had imagined that it was left behind at Witterby. It had belonged to her mother, so she would be pleased to get it back, but it did not occur to Ilden even to thank the woman who had restored it.

"And to what address have you sent it?" he asked, and the disturbed wonder in his mind became greater when she answered promptly with the address at Sydenham, where on the previous day he had left his wife.

But his voice was still matter-of-fact.

"And how did you discover where I lived?"

"Mr. Despard told me, sir, as I have been saying, this morning. He said that he would be going to Sydenham himself to-day and would see Mrs. George, and he offered to take the brooch himself. But he seemed so strange in his manner, if you will excuse me saying so, sir, of a friend of yours, that I thought it would be wiser to send it by post."

"You were quite right," he said mechanically, and as mechanically felt in his pocket to produce the expected reward. His face had grown perfectly pale. In some way the assassin had discovered the secret of his wife's whereabouts which he thought so secure. No doubt he had been watching them all through the fortnight when they thought themselves so free from observation, and had only waited for

Digitized by Google

them to separate to make an attempt on the life of each. That on himself had failed. But Florence, alone and defenceless!

How could he hope that she would escape from an enemy so irrationally implacable. The idea increasing in his mind that Despard was mad only increased his panic.

An agony of self-reproach mingled with his uneasiness. He ought never to have left her. If harm happened to her—he could not bear the thought, and he set his mind against it resolutely, afraid of the physical faintness which threatened to unman him. He needed all his strength and clearness of thought to get back and save her. He could not allow himself to think that it might be too late. The good fortune which had directed his steps to the inn could not surely desert him now.

He was inquiring whether he could have a vehicle of any sort to take him back to Shipton Gate, and there seemed to him a cruel irony in the situation when he found that the only one available was that which Despard himself had engaged.

It drove up, however, as he was speaking, but Ilden's relief at the fact was not unmixed. For the landlord who brought back the trap reported that he had used it according to the landlady's surmise to drive Despard back from Castledale to the station. He had caught a train which would take him to Rickerby in time to catch the London express there, if he were lucky.

Ilden cut short his story.

"When is there another train to the junction?"

"Not for a couple of hours, sir."

"And how far is it to the junction from here by road?"

According to the landlord it was barely ten miles, and Ilden's hopes rose. If Despard lost the express he might still overtake him.

He turned to the inn-keeper.

"I will give you ten pounds if you can get me to Rickerby within the hour."

Florence Vanishes.

THE tedious journey to Sydenham was, for George Ilden, one of those experiences which are calculated to turn a man's hair grey before its time.

He had reached Rickerby to find no trace of the man he was pursuing there, and could only conclude that Despard had managed to catch the express which was timed to reach King's Cross three hours before he himself could get there.

In three hours what might not happen. He could only hope that the would-be murderer, unconscious of his pursuit, would delay his actual journey to Sydenham.

And in any case he could at least send Florence a warning. It was not the time now for excess of caution, and he puzzled the telegraph clerk at the station by the message he dispatched.

But the fact that he had warned her did little to relieve his mind when he knew Despard's cunning. The man who had tracked them to Sydenham in spite of all their precautions could manage to follow her if she left the house.

From his conversation with the innkeeper on the way, he had become more than ever impressed with the idea that Despard was insane, but if so there was no doubting that his mania was united with the proverbial cunning of the maniac, and the thought only added to his nervousness. For the madman is restrained through no thought of selfish prudence.

It appeared that Despard had spent more than an hour at Castledale, visiting various people there, but to what purpose the innkeeper had been unable to make out, although it was apparent he had been curious enough.

With himself Despard had scarcely exchanged a word, but he had muttered to himself a great deal.

"It did not seem to me safe for him to be about by himself," the man had said to Ilden, and Ilden had smiled grimly as he answered that he was following the man to see him properly taken care of.

It was a grim smile, and it was the only one which crossed his face during the whole of his anxious journey from Lallerton to Sydenham. The delays seemed endless to him, making the journey one long-drawn torment of suspense.

In his telegram to his wife he had urged her to leave the house and await his arrival at the Crystal Palace Hotel, and his heart beat quickly with mingled hope and fear as he approached the rendezvous at last.

"No, there was no lady waiting for him there," and his heart sank like lead. If Florence had received his message, he did not doubt for a moment that she would have obeyed his wish, unless she had been prevented.

But he still buoyed himself up with hope, telling himself that the message must have miscarried, and that he would find her at home, unconscious that she had ever been in danger. Despard might come when he liked then, so long as he was at her side to protect her.

He jumped into a hansom and drove to their rooms; but, as he opened the door impatiently, his delusive hope sank; for the first thing he saw was his own telegram waiting on the hall table. Where was Florence, that she had not opened it?

He rang the bell furiously, and spread instant alarm into the mind of his landlady by his impatient inquiry for his wife.

"Oh! has she not been with you, sir?" she gasped. "I was hoping that she must have joined you when she did not come back. I should have communicated with you, but none of us knew where you had gone."

He leant back against the wall, overcome by a feeling of physical faintness. There was a singing, surging sound in his ears of which he had not been conscious since his delicate boyhood.

But he mastered the weakness which threatened him by an effort of self-command. He could not afford time to show weakness now."

"Tell me exactly what has happened," he said, speaking only a little more quietly than usual, and the landlady checked an inclination to become hysterical. But it was some time before he could get a connected story from her.

It seemed that almost immediately after he had left home on the previous day, a "young person" whom Mrs. FitzMorris Smith, the landlady, classed as a servant girl, had called at the house and asked to see Lord Ilden. On being assured that no person of the name resided there, she asserted that she had seen him several times entering the house with a lady and insisted on seeing the gentleman who was living there, whatever he might be calling himself. When she was told that Mr. George had left the house on a journey, she had demanded an interview with his wife.

"My heart misgave me from the first about her," said Mrs. Smith, beginning to sob. "But I thought it was only right to let Mrs. George know that she was here."

Ilden nodded.

"Of course. And what then?"

"Mrs. George had the woman shown in, and talked to her."

"Alone?"

"Yes. She asked me to remain, but the girl refused to say anything while I was there, and so I was asked to wait outside."

"And what did you hear there?"

Mrs. Smith was inclined to show indignation.

DO NOT MISS THE MADGE MORRIS WEDDING COMPETITION ON PAGE 647.

Digitized by Google

She had heard nothing, except once or twice the repetition of the name "Lord Ilden."

"And after that?" he asked.

"They came out of the room together, and Mrs. George dressed and went out with her. She did not tell me a word of what the girl had said, or where she was going with her, but when I asked her whether she would be back for dinner, she said 'most probably.' That, sir, was the last word I heard her speak, and the last time I set eyes on her. She never came back, and I had cooked a dinner special for her because I thought she might be a little down-hearted with you away."

"And she left no message for me?"

"No, sir, not a word. I am sure that she expected, when she left the house, to be back long before you were."

This was the whole of the story, and after trying in vain to extract any further detail of importance, Ilden left her to stride through his rooms, seeking the written message which she must surely have left for him somewhere. The artifice which had successfully decoyed her away must have been a marvellously cunning one to deceive her, when she was so completely on her guard and expectant; but however plausible the story told her had been, it was not like Florence, with her foresight and her thoughtfulness for him, to leave the house—with people who confessed themselves cognisant of her identity—without making some provision against a possible intrigue. He ransacked the rooms feverishly, seeking a scrap of paper from her, but in vain.

It was Mrs. Smith who interrupted him; she wanted to know whether he wished the cab to stay. Perhaps he had forgotten it.

As a matter of fact Ilden *had* forgotten its existence; but the reminder roused him to the fact that he must do something, and he went back to the hansom to be driven to the office of a private detective in town.

The time for secrecy had now gone. The publicity which he had hated to think of, the honour of the family which he had been so anxious to preserve, all these seemed insignificant now and not worth a thought. The only thing that concerned him was that his wife was gone, and that he must find her.

"The Albert Gate Mystery,"
Our Splendid New Serial, will Commence Shortly.

The only thought that frightened him was that he might find her too late. His heart sickened at the possibility. He had told himself confidently that Despard had attempted his own life first and would return to attempt that of his wife.

It seemed to him only too possible now that he had taken her life first.

If only he had known that when they stood face to face at Pennybrook.

From the office of the celebrated detective he was brought back in feverish haste by the delusive hope that Florence might have returned in his absence.

When he found the hope unsatisfied a sense of great desolation came upon him.

As he wandered through the deserted rooms, everything reminded him vividly of the girl-wife he seemed to have lost, and brought back the happy week they had spent there together to compare with his utter loneliness.

She had been embroidering a tobacco-pouch for him, and the work still lay on the table where she had last laid it down.

With a passionate rush of tenderness he raised it to his lips and kissed the work of her fingers.

"Little wife, little wife, come back to me. I want nothing in the world but you," he cried with a sob in his throat.

And he had wondered—how strange it seemed to him now—whether he loved her

A Carefully Planned Decoy.

MEANWHILE Florence had passed through emotions as poignant as those which tore the heart of her husband.

The visit of a stranger who knew Lord Ilden's name had filled her with an instant apprehension which was a little modified by the young woman's appearance.

It was difficult to associate danger or intrigue with the rosy-faced country-girl who stood before her excited with her mission. And she agreed with little reluctance to see her alone, as the girl wished.

"I want to see Lord Ilden," said her visitor abruptly, as soon as the landlady had left them, and Florence flushed uncomfortably. She had never practised subterfuge in her life, and it seemed necessary now.

"And who is Lord Ilden?" she asked, and the girl looked at her in surprise and something that looked like pity.

"What, hasn't he even told you his right name? Well! I do call *that* a shame."

There was something in her voice that made Lady Ilden proud and thankful to think that her ignorance of the man was only pretended.

She scarcely made an effort to keep up the pretence.

"And suppose I knew this Lord Ilden, may I ask why you want to see him, and what you have to say to him?"

The girl hesitated for a moment, and despairing of her ability to soften the blow, delivered it bluntly.

"I want to tell him that his wife is dying and ask him to come to her, poor thing."

She was surprised that the blow did not appear to hurt. The beautiful lady for whom she had been feeling some compunctions of pity only looked at her in bewilderment.

"Then I am sure that you are making a mistake," said Florence quietly. "I have reason to know that Lord Ilden's wife is quite well, and that she saw him quite recently."

"Meaning yourself?" said the girl, and went on without waiting for an answer. "I was afraid that you must be thinking yourself his wife when I saw you coming in and out here together, not to speak of your being with the gentleman at Lallerton. But if there is any worth in a marriage at the registrar's his wife is my poor mistress, who lies dying to-day because he has broken her heart."

"I am sure that you are making a mistake," said Florence again, her voice quite confident. "But you speak of Lallerton. Would you mind telling me who you are?"

She seated herself as she spoke, for the maid's assertion had tried her nerves, although she knew that it must be false, and she felt her limbs trembling beneath her.

"My name is Clara Wimple," said the girl, "and I followed you to Shipton Gate that day when you went there with his lordship, and him pretending that he did not know where his wife had gone to, although he had her letter telling him all the time. That is how I was so certain that it was you and Lord Ilden when I saw you coming in here. And if he has been deceiving you like he has deceived my poor mistress, I shall never forgive myself for warning him that day. He deserves all he gets if the master does meet him, and I am sure it was more for the poor master's sake than his that I tried to keep him away, knowing what I know, and having seen the master wandering round by his old home only that morning."

She was evidently debating with herself the morality of a past action, but on Florence the words were wasted. The tumult of thought bewildered her.

She was calming herself to ask a question.

"You say that Lord Ilden married your mistress. What is her name?"

Digitized by Google

"Lady Ilden, ma'am, although she and I are the only people that know it, and he won't admit it, and for his sake she keeps it a secret and keeps her maiden name."

"But her maiden name?" asked Florence impatiently.

"Was Miss Despard, ma'am. I was her maid at home and when she came here she sent for me and engaged me again."

Florence had known it before she spoke, and she drew her hand over her brows in a pathetic effort to think clearly.

It was false, of course, to say that George had been married when he met her—that she was not really his wife. She had laughed at the assertion in her heart, feeling that it was a trick intended to make her distrust him. But Daisy Despard could not have joined in a trick. She was the one person whom she believed in as completely as her husband. It was very strange. If Daisy said that George had married her——but it was impossible. He did not even know her. Of course when she spoke to her friend she would discover how the strange mistake had arisen.

"Miss Despard is a great friend of mine," she said. "I was very sorry when I found that she had left Lallerton without letting me know her new address. If you can tell me it, I should like to see her."

"I can take you to her at once," said the girl. "She is living quite close."

"Then I will come now and see her," said Florence.

The thought that this might be a trick did not suggest itself, and she put on her things impatiently.

It was not until they were out in the street that something the girl had said recurred to her mind.

"You spoke as though your mistress were ill. I hope that you were exaggerating."

"Oh! no, ma'am. I wish I were. But the doctor himself says that she has not strength enough to pull through. He doubts whether she will live through the night, and that is why I made up my mind to come and beg her husband to see her. You see, ma'am, something she saw in the papers last week gave her a shock when she ought to have been careful with her health, and now that it is over the doctor says she has not strength to pull round again. I don't know whether I am doing right in taking you to her."

"She is my greatest friend," said Florence. "I am sure that she will be glad to see me. Have you not told her that you have seen me."

"And his lordship? No, ma'am, I daren't; but it came over me this morning when I saw her asleep, that if her husband were to hear that she was dying, he might come to see her, and perhaps let her die happy by saying something kind. And to think that you and the mistress were friends!"

Something of the dramatic tragedy of the coincidence seemed to touch even her rustic imagination, and she lapsed into silence.

Florence did not break it. That she had found her friend, only to hear that she was dying, was in itself sufficient to occupy all her mind, apart from this strange, incredible story which connected her with George. The latter was, of course, some strange misunderstanding. She would not let her mind dwell on it, or even admit to herself that she wished to question her friend about it.

The rooms which the Despard's had taken on their flight from "Chez-nous" were, as Clara Wimple had said, quite close by, and the journey took only a few minutes.

Florence, walking as in a dream, realised that they were stopping before one of the tall houses in the next avenue, which she and George had passed all unconsciously on the previous day. She was conscious of no emotion beyond expectation. Something was going to happen. She waited for it breathlessly.

Her guide was opening the door without a key, and started back with a little cry of surprise and fear.

"The master is back again," she whispered to the silent figure following her.

(*Continued on next page.*)

BILE BEANS CURE A LONDON CHEF.

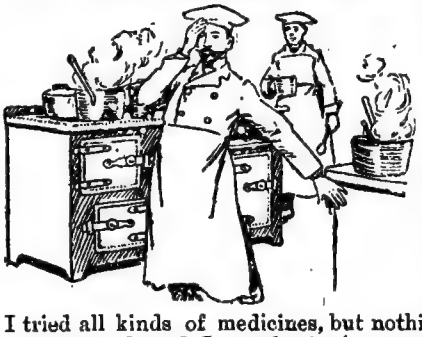
TESTIMONY FROM CHELSEA.

LIVER COMPLAINT, RHEUMATISM, AND DIZZINESS ENDED.

Mons. Etienne Sewry, of Shirley House, Gertrude Road, Chelsea, chef at one of London's most fashionable West-end hotels, tells an interesting story of how Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness cured him of liver complaint, rheumatism, and dizziness. It was told to a representative of the "Weekly Budget." Said M. Sewry:—

"The kitchen is not the healthiest of places, and biliousness is inseparable from the life of a chef, unless he is in perfect health. I suffered from biliousness and dizziness for a considerable time.

"It was all due to my liver being disordered. The attacks would come on me in the morning, together with a kind of dizziness. At times I was so bad I did not know what to do. The sourness in my stomach was very unpleasant. What was more, rheumatism attacked me, and was so severe in the shoulders that I could not put my hands behind my back.



I tried all kinds of medicines, but nothing did me any lasting good, and I was beginning to despair, when I read an account about Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness. I sent for a box, and when I had taken it I was astonished at the result. The Beans acted marvellously. The dizziness and mists before the eyes disappeared, and I felt better in every way. I persevered with the Beans, and in a short time was completely cured. I have not been troubled with biliousness since, and the rheumatism has also been banished. I am feeling in perfect form now, and it is a treat, I can tell you."

Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness have achieved a world-wide reputation as a certain cure for rheumatism, dizziness, all liver and kidney disorders, indigestion, constipation, female ailments, loss of appetite, fulness and belching after eating, piles, palpitation, neuralgia, and as a preventative of influenza. Bile Beans may be had of all chemists, or direct from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., Red Cross Street, London, E.C., on receipt of price, 1s. 1½d. or 2s. 9d. per box (2s. 9d. box contains three times 1s. 1½d.)

The Bile Bean Manufacturing Company will send you a free sample box of Bile Beans if you forward this coupon to their Central Distributing Depôt, Greek Street, Leeds (Yorks.), along with full name and address and a penny stamp to pay return postage.

Free Sample Coupon

BILE BEANS.

Short Stories, Nov. 22nd, 1902.

Digitized by Google

Florence had taken it for granted, in so far as she had thought of Guy Despard at all, that in seeing Daisy she would also meet her brother. In her knowledge of them they had always been together, and she wondered at the girl's surprise.

Despard was standing in the hall, and she was conscious that a great change had taken place in him even in the short time since she had travelled with him from Pennybrook to Rickerby. He had looked haggard and wild-eyed then. But now his face was ghastly in its hollowness and pallor. He was unshaven too, and his hair which he had always worn unconventionally long was unkempt and disordered.

He seemed to have been watching for the maid's arrival and addressed her sharply before he noticed that she was not alone.

"What right have you to leave the house, when your mistress may wake and want you? Go to her at once."

He caught sight of Florence as he spoke, and his face, which had been dark with anger, changed suddenly. It seemed to her that he was pleased as well as surprised that she had come.

"I have just heard that Daisy is ill and that you are living quite close to us," she said, holding out her hand. He appeared too agitated, however, to think of any conventional greeting, and her hand remained unnoticed. "It seems strange," she ran on, "that you should be so near me all the time that I have been trying to find you. I was so anxious to see Daisy and know what had become of her."

Clara Wimple stood hesitating near, as if anxious to speak and yet afraid to. Despard turned to her angrily.

"Go to your mistress."

Then, as the girl obeyed with evident reluctance, he turned to his unexpected visitor, his strange face fiercely eager.

"I am glad that you have come. But where is your husband? You say that you are living near here?"

The question seemed to her to lift a sudden weight from her mind. The girl must have made some ridiculous mistake. Mr. Despard had heard of her marriage, and accepted it. It was well that she had given no attention to the maid's words.

"Yes, we are in Woodborough Avenue," she said, "at Selwood House."

"And Lord Ilden is there now?"

"No, he has just gone back to Pennybrook. He received word this morning that his uncle, Rupert, is seriously ill—possibly dying—and wishes to see him. It is our first parting."

Despard smiled curiously.

"And will be your last, I hope. But you are anxious to see Daisy. You will find her very much changed. She was unconscious when I left her just now. If she should recognise you, there is no need for you to tell her that I have been here. I have just returned from a journey, and have to start again at once."

She looked at him in some surprise.

"You are leaving your sister when she is so ill! I understood that her case was critical."

His face was working convulsively, and made her feel vaguely alarmed.

"I am going for her sake. I shall have good news for her when I return. She will live to hear it."

She was too disturbed herself to notice fully the strangeness of his words and manner. But insensibly it prevented her asking any of the questions which were ready on her lip, questions about the strange assertion that Clara Wimpole had made.

Despard was taking her up to his sister's room, and left her at the door. He seemed restless and impatient.

"You are starting at once?" she asked, and he nodded with the strange eagerness in his wild eyes again.

"At once. I have lost too much time already."

Inside the room she found a professional nurse as well as the maid seated beside the bed on which her old schoolfriend lay unconscious.

She lay so still and her face was so thin and worn that it seemed to Florence as if it must be the unconsciousness of death. Her heart filled with a great pity, which drove from her mind every thought except that this was the friend she loved, the one woman who had been kind to her in her days of adversity. She sank on her knees by the side of the bed and touched the worn face with her lips.

"Daisy, dearest, it is I, Florrie. Don't you know me?" she cried, but no response came from the unconscious figure on the bed, and Florence's eyes filled with tears.

"She has been like that for hours now," said the nurse, her matter-of fact voice sounding to her strangely out of keeping with the solemnity of the room. "The doctor says that she may pass away like that, or she may be conscious for a little while before the end. It may come at any time now. Won't you sit down, ma'am. You don't look strong."

She sat down crying silently.

"You will be the friend that she has been asking for so much," said the nurse. "She was always calling for 'Florrie' when she was delirious, or for her husband."

"Her husband?" Florence repeated the words questioningly, and the nurse lowered her voice.

"Or the gentleman who ought to be. I suppose that it is him she calls 'George.'"

Florence started. For the moment she had forgotten, and the name brought it all back. Daisy's maid had told her an impossible story connecting the two.

It must be a mistake, because her husband had never met Daisy. She knew it from his own lips. And yet—it seemed as though some mocking spirit outside herself, whispered the words in her ear—he had gone to Lallerton to see her. The conversation in which her friend's name was first mentioned between them came back vividly. "Has Miss Despard ever spoken about me?" George had asked her, and had seemed very eager for her answer. It was only when she showed her surprise at his knowing her friend that he told her they had never met.

She tried to silence the voice. It was disloyal to her love to listen. Daisy would come back to consciousness and tell her that the maid had made a mistake, and she directed her attention to the figure on the bed again. Would her friend ever wake again to silence the mocking voice that derided her, reminding her that after all she had known her husband only for one short fortnight.

"THE ALBERT GATE MYSTERY,"
Our Splendid New Serial, will Commence Shortly.

"Lord Ilden is My Husband!"

"Don't you think that her husband ought to see her before she dies?"

The words roused Florence from a reverie. She could not tell how long she had been sitting there, lost to all that passed around her in the concentration of her mind on the dialogue that seemed to carry itself on there without her will.

Her heart cried out again and again that nothing could make her doubt her husband's goodness and love. He had proved them so fully in the little while that they had been together. And still the mocking voice gave its answer, and all her mind went to the silencing of it. And now she seemed roused as from a dream by Clara Wimple's hushed voice. The nurse had left the room. She had not noticed her departure, nor the fact that the maid had returned to take her place.

"Her husband?" she repeated, starting.

(Continued on page 671.)

Google

ASTHMA

WHY ? ? is it generally thought that there is no cure for

ASTHMA, CHRONIC BRONCHITIS,

SHORTNESS OF BREATH, EMPHYSEMA, BLOOD-SPITTING, HAY FEVER, and other Lung Complaints.

BECAUSE ! ! the usual treatments only confine themselves to combating single symptoms instead of attacking the root of the disease.

BE SURE THERE IS ONE

ABSOLUTE LASTING CURE.

Sufferers will receive post free,

FREE OF CHARGE.

particulars of the famous WEIDHAAS HOME TREATMENT when applying to THE PAUL WEIDHAAS HYGIENIC INSTITUTE, 16 T.A. Buckingham Rd., Brighton.

Mr. Weidhaas has tried the Treatment on himself, after having been given up as incurable, and cured himself, and had then practised it for over 19 years in many thousands of special cases. Many having suffered for over 40 years have been cured by his Treatment (in some instances even at the age of 70 or 80 years), after having been

GIVEN UP AS INCURABLE.

No interference with daily occupation. Send description of complaint, and mention if you suffer from **COLD FEET.** Read the following Testimonial, one out of thousands received:

A SEPTUAGENARIAN CURED OF CHRONIC BRONCHITIS.

Mrs. INKPIN.)
(From a photo.

"For over thirty-seven years I suffered with Bronchitis, with wheezing, rattling in my chest, heavy breathing. I got so weak from constant coughing, and the difficulty of breathing increased. If I went out walking, when I returned I would cough for an hour before I could get any relief, or if I went upstairs I was sure to cough. I could not do my domestic work, and I was afraid to eat anything. I tried everything my friends recommended me, but of no avail. My doctor told me that I should never be cured. I have been in my bed three months at a time, and for weeks could not lie down. My feet were always cold, and I have had to fight for my breath. I bless the day I wrote to Mr. Weidhaas. I had not been under treatment long before I began to find relief, and I persevered, and am happy to say I am quite cured. I can now do my domestic work, and I am seventy-three years old."

Lindfield. Mrs. S. INKPIN.
(Full address on application.)

The Director is prepared to pay

£1,000

to any Charitable Institution if the above is not a genuine extract from the patients' own letters. The originals may be seen at the Paul Weidhaas Hygienic Institute by any bona-fide enquirers.

CURABLE

KSR . KSR . KSR .

HYPNOTISM

THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS

Reader, have you ever stopped to consider why some persons are so successful; why everything they touch seems to turn to gold; why they acquire wealth, position, power and influence without any seemingly great effort on their part? Such persons surround themselves with friends, are honoured and respected in their communities; are sought after in society, and gain prominence and distinction without apparently trying. Have you ever considered these things? Do you know why?

WHAT BRINGS SUCCESS

Not hard work, for the poor work harder than the rich. Not birth, because many of our successful men are of lowly parentage. Not luck, for many a lucky man dies friendless and poor. We will tell you why. The secret of success in life is personal influence—the ability to make others think as you do; to win their confidence and friendship and get them to help you. There is a secret power by which you can wield an irresistible personal influence; by which you may overcome all obstacles, charm and fascinate whom you will; by which you may cure every known disease and bad habit without the aid of drugs, medicines or the surgeon's knife. It is called personal Magnetism or Hypnotism. It is the basis of success in every business and calling.

A GOD-GIVEN POWER

It is a God-given power that is the heritage of the poor as well as the rich. It is truly the wonder science of the age. Consider what it means to be able to convince a man that your goods are the best on the market, that your services are invaluable to him, that you are offering to him a good investment, that he needs what you have to sell, that your opinion is correct, that he should act upon your advice, and a thousand other things of this kind. Consider what an advantage such a power would give you. If you wish to secure a good paying position, obtain an increase in salary, or add to your present income in any way, a knowledge of hypnotism will prove invaluable. In hundreds of instances it has been the turning point in the lives of people who were ready to give up in despair—for whom the future seemed to have no hope.

LEARN AT HOME FREE

We have just issued the most remarkable book of the century, which explains all about hypnotism, personal magnetism, magnetic healing, etc., in language so plain that a child can understand it. The book was written by Dr. X. La Motte Sage, A.M., Ph.D., LL.D., the most eminent and renowned hypnotist of modern times. It tells of new secret instantaneous methods which enable any intelligent person to learn this mysterious science at home in a few days and use the power on his friends and associates entirely without their knowledge. We absolutely guarantee success or forfeit $1,000.00 in gold. Many persons are now making from $2,000.00 to $5,000.00 per year from what they learned from this remarkable work, while some have grown immensely wealthy.

Dr. Sage, the author of this rare book, has determined that all the people shall now have the mysterious secrets which have been so jealously guarded for ages. He has determined that the poor shall have an equal chance with the rich.

A BOOK OF RARE SECRETS GIVEN AWAY

He has sold the copyright of his book with the understanding that **Ten Thousand Copies** shall be distributed to the public free of charge; and this agreement is now being complied with. Anyone can get a copy **absolutely free**, postage prepaid, simply by addressing penny post-card to the

NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE,

DEPARTMENT VA29, ROCHESTER, N.Y., U.S.A.

"This great work is worth more than gold. It is full of wonderful secrets and startling surprises. Its teachings are next in value to those of the Holy Bible. I advise everyone to obtain a copy."—REV. PAUL WELLER, Gorham, N.Y.

"Lord Ilden. It does not seem right that she should die without seeing him. I thought that, if you knew where he was, you would send for him, now that you see for yourself how ill the poor mistress is. I did not dare to ask you before, because of the master being here; but I have just been asking, and they say that he has gone away again by train; so that there could be no harm in his lordship coming for an hour or so. You will send for him, won't you? I think the poor mistress would die happy if she could only see him once, in spite of the way in which he has treated her. She would never believe that he really meant to desert her. Perhaps I ought not to be talking like this to you, ma'am, being as you think that he is your husband too; but you can't love him like the poor mistress does."

Florence kept her voice steady and dignified.

"I am sure that you are making a mistake. Lord Ilden has never met Miss Despard. He told me so himself."

"As I suppose he would, ma'am. Men seem all alike to me. There's no believing them. Whether they are lords, or just plain, ordinary men, they are just the same to women."

Florence interrupted her.

"But what makes you think it was Lord Ilden who married your mistress?"

"She told me so herself, ma'am; and besides, I was with her the first time that she ever met him. It was in the Castledale woods early in the summer, and Miss Daisy was making a picture of the old ruins. I had gone with her to carry the luncheon basket. Lord Ilden had been fishing and lost his way, and he asked us to direct him how to get out of the woods. He said he was staying at the inn at Castledale. I thought then that he must know his way well enough, and had only made an excuse for stopping because Miss Daisy was so pretty. But she did not seem to think of that, and she took him herself as far as the path, and they talked a good deal, and I knew that she liked him. And when we went home she asked me not to speak about the meeting to anybody for fear of Mr. Guy hearing of it. He was always so queer if she made a new friend.

"And the next day his lordship was at the ruins again, and the next, and I suppose a good many days after. But Miss Daisy said that there was no need for me to carry the basket, and I only knew from her face when she came home that she had met him. Indeed, those first three days were the only time that I ever saw his lordship till he came to Lallerton with you. He took good care to keep out of the master's way. Miss Daisy had told him, I suppose, that her brother didn't like her having friends.

"Mr. Guy himself was working hard at a picture, and thought she only went to Castledale for the sketching; and then he went to London to see the galleries, and while he was away Miss Daisy went away too, for a week, and when she came back she told me that she was married to Lord Ilden, but that I was not to tell a soul, because his lordship had important reasons for wishing the marriage to be kept secret for the present, and she did not dare yet to tell her brother. Not that she told me at once, till I had begun to suspect it. His lordship had gone away then, and she wrote begging for permission to tell her brother. But he said that it would spoil everything. She showed me his letter—a cruel letter it seemed to me—so that I should see how important it was to keep silence. He said that it might never be possible for him to acknowledge her unless she kept their secret a little longer.

"And then her brother found out. But she kept her promise, and would not say that she was married. I told him myself, but she denied it for her husband's sake, and she sent me away because I had told him Lord Ilden's name.

"I think that it turned Mr. Guy mad. He had always thought so much of his sister. He went about after that trying to find his lordship. By that time I believe the mistress had ceased to get any letter from him. She used to write to some address he had given her. He would never have the letters sent to his own home, Ilden Castle.

"Miss Daisy—or rather Lady Ilden, as I ought to call her—was afraid that her letters must have miscarried; but she would not disobey him even then, till she found what Mr. Guy was doing, and then she wrote to him where he was staying with some friends in Yorkshire. She saw it in the papers that he was there. I believe he told her then that they weren't really married.

"She has talked about it when she was ill. But I am sure it was a real marriage—Miss Daisy wouldn't have been deceived. And if he knew that his wife was dying and that you knew about her, I should think he would come, if he has any heart at all. You will send for him, ma'am?"

Florence shook her head.

"I would send for him if I thought that it were true. But I cannot believe it. Your mistress will tell us that you have made a mistake, that it was not Lord Ilden she married. Lord Ilden is my husband!"

(The result of this strange interview will be told next Tuesday.)

"DEAREST KITTY," wrote a young lady recently, "I've turned over a new leaf, and broken all engagements but two."

"MISS SYBILLE JONES is going to travel under an assumed name." "Whatever for?" "Well, you see, she gets married next week, and she's going on her honeymoon."

UNSOPHISTICATED PARENT: "Hallo there, nurse, what's that baby yelling like that for? I can't read at all." Nurse: "He's cutting his teeth, sir." U. P.: "Well, see that he doesn't do it any more, or you lose your place."

FLOSSY: "Come, Johnny, let's play we's married." Johnny: "Very well, Flossy." "Come in, den, come in to dinner. How do you like de dinner to-day, my dear?" "It is a good dinner. A very good dinner, indeed." "Oh, you mustn't say dat, you must say dat it ain't wuf a dash. If I couldn't cook a dinner better than dat I would bury myself in the back garden. That's the way papa talks."

The NEW STANDARD book
On CONJURING is

The Modern Conjurer

By C. LANG NEILL.

With an introduction by . .
CHARLES BERTRAM.

Explaining and Illustrating Tricks by

J. N. MASKELYNE
TREWEY
CHARLES BERTRAM
T. NELSON DOWNS
MLLE. PATRICE
FRANK KENNARD
PAUL VALADON
H. DE MANCHE
L. GRAHAM LEWIS
ELLIS STANYON
and others.

With over 500 Illustrations from Photographs of Actual Tricks.

Demy 8vo, cloth. Price **6s.**

Professor Bertram, the greatest drawing-room conjurer of the present time, concludes his introduction as follows:

With the greatest possible pleasure I recommend these fascinating pages to amateurs and experts as the finest and most reliable work upon Modern Conjuring and Feats of Dexterity that has ever been produced.

At all booksellers, and Hamley Bros. Limited, 231 High Holborn and 35 New Oxford Street, or of the Book Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

By Madge Morris.

[I shall be glad to answer, to the best of my ability, any letters from readers dealing with affairs of the heart, tangles in domestic life, or points of etiquette. All communications must be addressed to me personally, c/o the Editor of SHORT STORIES.*]*

How to Congratulate.

SURELY, "ADA," it is not necessary for you to ask me how you should congratulate a very dear friend on her engagement? You certainly do know how to write a letter, if the one you have written to me is a specimen. Write to her just as one girl should to another—a letter expressing your pleasure at her engagement, your hopes for her happiness, and any little confidential advice or comments you may be in a position to offer her. Above all, don't be formal or stiff in such correspondence. A genuine letter of congratulation between friends should be natural and not based on any mere form.

The Usual Parent.

"LENA'S" father absolutely refuses to allow her to marry "EDWIN." "EDWIN," however, presses her continuously to continue to be his sweetheart. Should "LENA" oppose her parent's wishes, and agree?

* * * *

Perhaps you had better accept your parent's decision for the time. By remaining true to "EDWIN"—if you love him—in course of time your father must see that it is futile to stand in your way further. Many fathers have been brought to consent to their daughters' engagement if they have seen that their interference is of no avail.

The Unready Lover.

"CAMALLA" has been receiving attentions from a man, but as yet he has made her no definite proposal, but only hinted at marriage. He has professed his love for her, but has lately grown less effusive. He is going to America next year. How is "CAMALLA" to let him know that she loves him very deeply?

* * * *

I cannot understand your difficulty, "CAMALLA." He professes that he loves you, and has suggested marriage. Perhaps he cannot make a definite proposal yet, owing to his prospects. As he is going to America, perhaps it is not possible to make you an offer until he returns. Wait until he does so, in the meantime making him as sure of your love and constancy as you can.

Must He Marry?

MUST a man get married, even if he has not yet met the woman of his heart? "TWENTY-EIGHT" has had one or two love affairs, but none of them have made him the happy possessor of a wife. Now he is no longer in the first flush of youth he is beginning to speculate on the future. As a bachelor, he tells me, he is perfectly happy. His father and mother are living, and he has a comfortable home. He has no present fancy for any particular girl. What he wishes to know is, "should he look for a wife?"

* * * *

If you are perfectly happy, "TWENTY-EIGHT," that is a state which cannot be improved upon. You have, it seems, a good home, a father and mother. You are not in love with any girl. Why then bother your head about matrimony? If your nature is one which pines for the solace of a wife, those one or two love affairs you speak of will in all probability be repeated as time goes on, and you will meet some other woman. Wait till she comes your way, which she must, sooner or later, if you are an ordinary man, of susceptible disposition, and not of the family of woman-haters.

Trapped!

WHAT can a man do when he has been entrapped into a proposal? "LESLIE" feels he has made a fool of himself. Having been thrown very much into "ADA'S" society, he overstepped the bounds of flirtation by saying in a half joking manner that he would like to marry her. He does not know why he said it, but the girl took it quite literally, accepted the proposal, and announced it to her friends. Everybody now looks upon them as engaged, yet "LESLIE" really had no such intention. How can he get out of it?

* * * *

Explain to the girl that your remark was not intended seriously. Ask her to act in an honourable way and release you from any engagement. If you think she really believed you when you proposed, and acted in good faith, you can scarcely break off the engagement without laying yourself open to social censure, or even a breach of promise action. This being the case, I should advise you to accept the situation, but refrain from any further visits to her. If a man has been the victim of a trap—such as, apparently, you have—while he is outwardly pledged to marriage, it is his own affair when to consummate it, and the law cannot compel a man to marry any woman. Absent yourself, after explaining to the girl the facts of the case, and leave it to time to put things in order.

A Dilatory Admirer.

"DAISY" two years ago met a man of whom she became very enamoured. For a long time he wrote to her in very friendly terms, but never breathed a word of any idea of serious intentions towards her. Now "DAISY" has met another man, by whom she is not so much attracted, but who appears to be very fond indeed of her. Should she listen to the attentions of the latter, or wait until the former makes some definite proposal.

* * * *

The first man, "DAISY," has had ample time in which to make any proposal. As he has not done so, it would be better for you to assume that he has no serious intentions towards you, but values you only as a friend. You should not be bound by the shadowy idea that he may suddenly alter his attitude. Meanwhile, you are yourself the best judge as to whether the new admirer is a desirable suitor for you. Certainly do not take up a stiff attitude towards him. Try his companionship for a while, and see how your feelings develop. You may in time get to regard him with affection. Possibly you are not one of the "first sight" lovers, and require time to know where your affections lie.

Accepting a Compliment.

"E. S. S."—Thank you so much for your sweet letter. The little affair has now, I hope, been forgotten, as I am sure few readers would wish to accuse me of sowing discord between husband and wife. When you are introduced to anyone, and they venture to say they would "like to meet you again," it is more usual to bow and accept the compliment in smiling silence. If, as you say, you really do wish to meet the individual in question again, why not say, in reply to his wish, "I daresay we shall," adding that you have been "much interested" in his conversation, or pleased with the way he dances, sings, or plays. Some such nice little return compliment should be passed. If, however, you are unable to pass any such compliment, it would be better to accept his remark with a simple bow.

Printed by HORACE COX, Breem's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

CHRISTMAS

No more generally acceptable Christmas Gift can be found than some little piece of Jewellery—a **BROOCH** or **PIN**, a **WATCH** or **CHAIN**, a **BRACELET** or **LOCKET**, **RING** or **CHARM**, or something more generally useful in the house—**ELECTRO-PLATE** or **CUTLERY.**

OUR CATALOGUE (Illustrated),

which we send free of all cost to anyone sending their name and address, will be found a perfect gold mine to all who are wanting to make presents this Christmas. It contains, besides Jewellery, Electro-Plate, and Cutlery, hundreds of charming things—**Cameras, Phonographs, Opera Glasses, Musical Instruments, Organettes, Furniture,** etc.—practically everything that the present-seeker is likely to want, and all at **FIGURES CONSIDERABLY BELOW USUAL PRICES.** Send at once for this valuable Book of Reference.

If you cannot pay all at once for the article chosen, we shall be just as pleased to supply you on terms whereby you can pay a little at a time, monthly.

J. M. DRAPER,

(DEPT. 366), Northern Emporium, Higher Audley St., Blackburn.

PRESENTS

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: *"Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."*

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietor, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Countess Furstenberg, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Coniston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

HERE'S MONEY.

SEND us your name and address, and you will receive **Free** on approval 24 of our Silver Aluminium 1900 Novelty Thimbles. Each one is prettily embossed with the inscription "Remember Me," "Forget-me-not." They are lighter and tougher than silver, never tarnish, and will last a lifetime. One million sold already.

WE TRUST YOU—

NO MONEY REQUIRED.

Sell the thimbles at **2d.** each, making **4/-** altogether, which forward to us, and we will send you at once the Guaranteed Timekeeper or other Presents of High-class Jewellery you have earned, and which you can select from our list sent with the "Sell-at-Sight" Thimbles, and we will also tell you how you can make a regular income of **£2 10s. per week.** Write to-day and we send to-morrow.

GOLD & Co., No. 37 THE WATCH HOUSE Delamere Crescent, London, W.

Many will tell you that "Tatcho" is the only remedy they have found serviceable after years of trying.

"TATCHO"

Gets the hair back. Puts the hair right. Keeps the hair right.

WHO SAY SO.

The Hon. Mrs. GORDON—

"The Hon. Mrs. Gordon has derived much benefit from 'Tatcho.'—8 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, August 28th, 1902."

PRINCESS EUGENIE CRISTOFOROS PALŒLOGUE—

"'Tatcho' is invaluable. I would not be without it on any account. — Belvedere Hotel, Kensington."

Major-General KEATE—

"I find 'Tatcho' excellent, and better than anything I have ever tried in the course of a long life. I could not have believed that any preparation could do so much good in so short a time.—High Croft, Winchester."

LADY SYKES—

"I can recommend 'Tatcho.' It has entirely renovated my hair.—Mayfair, W."

Commander T. WOLFE MURRAY, R.N.

"I have found 'Tatcho' of distinct benefit to my hair.—Trobridge, Crediton, June 18th, 1902."

Colonel PERRY—

"My dear Mr. Sims,—'Tatcho' is wonderful, and all to whom I recommend it praise it. I hope others have advised the use of 'Tatcho' as I have.—Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dawson Street, Dublin."

Colonel BAGOT-CHESTER—

"I well know how valuable 'Tatcho' is.—Zetland House, Maidenhead."

"A hair on the Head is worth two in the brush."

"TATCHO" is sold by all Chemists and Stores throughout the World, in Bottles at 1/-, 2/9, and 5/-.

A 4/6 full size Trial Bottle for 1/10

is supplied to enable the public to test the possibilities of "Tatcho." Chemists, Stores, and Hairdressers, or direct, carriage paid, from the "Tatcho" Depot, Lincoln's Inn, London.

CADBURY'S Cocoa

"A Perfect Food."

It has stood the TEST OF TIME.

"FIRST and FOREMOST."

'Cadbury's'

Is COCOA and the BEST COCOA only.

Points from the Press.

"The perfect purity of CADBURY'S Cocoa—a strong point with the makers—constitutes its firm hold upon the public confidence, and the secret of its universal popularity."—*Health.*

Strength, Purity, Nourishment.

ROBIN

The New

Starch

Makes LINEN GLOSSY, STIFF & FLEXIBLE

Does not Stick to the Iron.

Made by the Manufacturers of the celebrated Reckitt's Paris Blue.

A DAILY LUXURY.

BIRD'S CUSTARD POWDER

BIRD'S CUSTARD is Pure, Creamy, Nutritious, and easily digested. It is a wholesome, delicious article of diet for daily use. Eggs often disagree; BIRD'S CUSTARD never.

AS AN ARTICLE OF DIET

BIRD'S CUSTARD

is unrivalled for nutriment and delicacy of flavour.

BIRD'S CUSTARD is the *one thing needed* with all Fresh, Stewed, or Tinned Fruits. Practical housewives always keep a supply ready at hand.

NO EGGS! NO RISK! NO TROUBLE!